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THE SOCIAL LIFE OF SCOTLAND

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF SCOTLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BY
HENRY GREY GRAHAM

VOL. I

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PREFACE

In Scotland during the eighteenth century there were only two outstanding events which, after the Union, specially belong to its history—the Rebellion of '15 and the Rebellion of '45. Besides these rebellions, we find as State affairs of Scotland chiefly obscure intrigues of factions, Whig and Tory, Presbyterian and Jacobite; measures managed by leaders of Scottish business, who were servile followers of English ministries; manœuvres of Scots nobles and placemen who travel southwards on horseback or in coach to win favour with great statesmen at Westminster or courtiers at St. James's—figures not very real to us to-day as they flit across the stage, "transient and embarrassed phantoms." To the end of the century—when Henry Dundas was "uncrowned King" of Scotland, pulling every political wire, and making local magnates and voters in town and country obsequiously move like puppets at his will—political life in North Britain was virtually non-existent.

This book, however, does not treat of stirring and striking episodes such as the Rebellions, with their elements of high romance not unalloyed with dingy intrigue: for these a sketch would be too little, and here a history would be too much. Still less does it concern itself with the ways of politicians, who often mistook State craftiness for Statecraft, from the pettifogging schemers at the beginning of the century to the dictatorship and despotic party domination at the close: these

interested the country a little at that time, but they interest us very little to-day. The following pages treat of the social condition of the country—chiefly in the Lowlands—and the internal changes through which it passed during a hundred years, with details which the historian dismisses with impatience as unconsidered trifles marring the dignity of his theme and disturbing the flow of his narrative. Yet, after all, it is in the inner life of a community that its real history is to be found—in the homes, and habits, and labours of the peasantry; in the modes, and manners, and thoughts of society; what the people believed and what they practised; how they farmed and how they traded; how the poor were relieved; how their children were taught, how their bodies were nourished, and how their souls were tended. On this last subject it may be thought that too much has been said—that the religious and ecclesiastical state of Scotland has been dealt with on a scale too large and disproportionate. It must, however, be remembered that such a part—too large and disproportionate—it also formed in the existence and concerns of the people. No doubt many of the religious ways and habits, the old-world theology, have long ago vanished, leaving only memories, humorous, pathetic, or bitter, behind them; curious convictions that once were charged with dangerous force in sectarian polemics are now cold and harmless, like exploded shells on an old battlefield. But it is impossible to understand the character and conduct of the Scottish people without knowing those bygone customs and beliefs which were once full of intense vitality. Nowhere were Church spirit so keen, Church influence so far-reaching, and Church affairs so intimate, as in Scotland.

Probably no period was so quietly eventful in shaping the fortunes and character of the country as the eighteenth century. Others are more distinguished by striking incidents, others are more full of the din and tumult and strife which arrest attention and are treated as crises, although they may neither stir the

depths nor affect the course of a people's life; but in that century there was a continuous revolution going on—a gradual transformation in manners, customs, opinions, among every class; the rise and progress of agricultural, commercial, and intellectual energy, that turned waste and barren tracts to fertile fields—stagnant towns to centres of busy trade—a lethargic, slovenly populace to an active, enterprising race—an utterly impoverished country to a prosperous land. These facts constitute the real history of the Scots in the eighteenth century.

The literature of the period, which developed so marvellously after the middle of the century, is only slightly indicated in this study of the time. It is a subject full of interest and importance; but, though it came within the scope of this work, it could not be put within the bounds of its space.

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SOCIAL LIFE OF SCOTLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

CHAPTER I

COUNTRY SOCIETY AND COUNTRY LIFE

1700–1750

I

SCOTLAND, although geographically separated from England by only an invisible march here and a narrow river there, was socially far separated by immemorial antagonism, by bitter historical traditions, by strength of inveterate prejudice, by diversity of laws, by opposition of Church creed and polity, by hostile interests in trade, by contrast in ways of living, tone of thought, and mode of speech.

Feelings and usages had become part of life and character which were peculiarly Scottish, forming the undefinable quality of nationality; and these had become intensified and confirmed by political jealousy, and maintained with patriotic animosity—all which had the effect of giving a striking individuality to the people. This contrast and this separation continued very long after the Union of 1707, which united the governments, but could not unite the two peoples. Intercourse between them was slight, always intermittent, and seldom pleasant even in the highest classes. Dislike of everything English was keen in the North; a contempt of everything Scottish was bitter in the South. Communication with England was rare even

among people of quality; for distances were great, roads were execrable, and the cost of travelling and lodging was appalling to people who, in all ranks, high and low, were miserably poor.

All these barriers kept Scotland in a state of isolation. The country could modify little and learn little, even if inclined to change, by contact with another state of civilisation; and so it happened that half of the eighteenth century elapsed with few peculiar habits and national customs having passed away.

The few Englishmen who journeyed to North Britain, from spirit of adventurous curiosity or from stress of business, entered upon the expedition with the air of heroic courage with which a modern traveller sets forth to explore the wild region of a savage land. If the tourist entered Scotland by way of Berwick and the Lothians, he did not at first meet much to shock him by ugly contrast. If he entered by Dumfriesshire and the moors of Galloway, he was at once filled with dismay by the dismal change from his own country—the landscape a bleak and bare solitude, destitute of trees, abounding in heather and morass and barren hills; soil where cultivation was found only in dirty patches of crops, on ground surrounded by heather and bog; regions where the inhabitants spoke an uncouth dialect, were dressed in rags, lived in hovels, and fed on grain, with which he fed his horses; and when night fell, and he reached a town of dirty thatched huts, and gained refuge in a miserable abode that passed for an inn, only to get a bed he could not sleep in, and fare he could not eat, his disgust was inexpressible. After he had departed, and finally reached his English home in safety, he wrote down his adventures as a modern explorer pens his experiences in Darkest Africa; and then he uttered frankly to the world his vehement emotions. It is thus one English gentleman, escaping to his native soil, summed up his impressions of the North: "I passed to English ground, and hope I may never go to such a country again. I thank God I never saw such another, and must conclude with poet Cleveland—

> Had Cain been Scot, God had ne'er changed his doom,
> Not made him wander, but confined him home."[1]

[1] *Journey through North of England and Scotland in* 1704, p. 65, privately printed, Edin. 1818.

It was in such a way that travellers up to the middle of the century—and, indeed, for a long while after—were accustomed to speak of North Britain. Meanwhile, to the stay-at-home Englishman, Scotland remained a *terra incognita.* Rumour exaggerated all its terrors, and prejudice believed in them long after they had passed away.[1] Not even in the wild scenery did the traveller see anything of beauty or sublimity, but rather forms of ugliness and gloom which deepened his dislike of the land. In vain did Nature present its finest and grandest aspects to his gaze—the roaring torrent, the towering mountain height, the boundless moor rich in purple glory. Captain Burt was quite disposed to speak fair of the country and its people; but a Highland landscape only awakened abhorrence in the cultivated Englishman, who preferred Rosamond's Pond to any loch, and Primrose Hill to every mountain.

"The huge naked rocks, being just above the heath, produce the disagreeable appearance of a scabbed head." That is his ruthless comment. He concludes what he calls "the disagreeable subject" of the outward appearance of the mountains by saying, "There is not much variety in it, but gloomy spaces, different rocks, and heath high and low. To cast one's eye from an eminence towards a group of them, they appear still one above the other, fainter and fainter according to aerial perspective, and the whole of a dismal brown drawing upon a dirty purple, and most of all disagreeable when the heath is in bloom."[2] The love of nature in its wild aspects did not inspire the clever engineer of Marshal Wade, who liked better to level the heights and make rough places smooth than to look on them. Not yet did such scenery attract travellers and kindle enthusiasm. They described the Dumfriesshire hills as "presenting a most hideous aspect"; mountains as "black and frightful"; and Goldsmith, in 1753, had nothing to say of the characteristic features of Scottish scenery except that "hills and rocks intercept every prospect."[3]

[1] Burt, i. 5. Much later in the century it was true that "English ministers did not know much more of Scotland than they did of Tartary."—Ramsay's *Scotland and Scotsmen,* i. 48.

[2] Burt, i. 285.

[3] "Drumlanrig is like a fine picture in a dirty grotto. It is environed with mountains which have the wildest and most hideous aspect of any in all the south

Leaving the habits and modes of life of the peasantry to be described elsewhere, we turn to the manners of country society at a time when the number of modest estates was great, and smaller gentry abounded. Their tastes were frugal, and their notions, like their incomes, narrow. A gentleman might have a property wide in range of land, but producing rents miserably mean, derived from some small "mailings" or crofts more fertile in weeds than in grain, which formed little oases in vast expanses of unreclaimed moor, hill, and bog, and were let at a rental from 1s. to 3s. an acre. A Scots landowner in the early part of the century was wealthy with a rent-roll of £500, rich with an income of from £300 to £200, well off with £100 or £80; and many gentlemen of good degree and long pedigree had to preserve their station with £50 to £20 a year.[1] Nor was this rental paid in money. Half of it or two-thirds was paid in kind[2]—so many sheep, eggs, poultry; so many bolls of barley, oats, or pease. When the term of Whitsunday or Martinmas came round, the half-starved horses of the tenants were to be seen, in unsteady cavalcade, stumbling slowly along the bridle-paths, one man guiding every two emaciated beasts, which laboured under their burdens of one boll each. The grain was deposited in the girnal or granary attached to the house, and there it remained till it was consumed by the household, or sold in the market to produce the money which was sorely needed for home expenditure; though

part of Scotland."—*Tour in Great Britain*, iv. 124. "From Kilsyth we mounted the hills, black and frightful as they are, to find the roads over the moors and mountains to Stirling."—*Ibid.* p. 152. Forster's *Life of Goldsmith*, i. 438.

[1] "There are a great many [estates] in Scotland from £100 to £20, and some less, possessed by gentlemen of very good families." "The laird retains half of his land in his hand, and lets the rest, of which 400 acres may produce £50 value."—*Essay on Ways and Means of Enclosing*, etc., p. 117: Edin. 1729.

[2] In *Edinburgh Evening Courant* of March 15, 1742, among advertisements of roups of land, is that land and barony of Kerco and Ballathie, in Perthshire, which gives fair sample of the forms of rental: "£1785 Scots in money, 33 bolls bear, 48 bolls meal, 7 bolls malt, 14 salmon fishes, a mill-swine, 32 poultry fowls, 12 capons, and 48 dargues" (days' work). Among the forfeited estates of 1715, ranging from Lords Winton, Southesk, and Panmure, with rental of over £3000 a year, to lairds with a rental from £80 to £50, from a half to two-thirds was paid in kind. Sir John Preston of Prestonhall had an income of £230, only £68 being in coin, the rest in grain, straw, and poultry. Sir David Threipland of Fingask had an income of £537, all but £147 being paid in grain, yarn, geese, hens, and chickens.—Murray's *York Buildings Company*, p. 121.

too often it was spoilt by long keeping in the hope of getting a better price, or half eaten by the rats.

Mansion-houses, of course, varied greatly in style and dimensions, according to the rank and income of their owners—from the massive castellated buildings of nobles and chiefs, generally dating from the sixteenth century, with their turrets and battlements, big courtyards, half-dried moats and iron gateways, down to the more homely dwelling of two storeys, devoid of dignity from the floor to the corbel-stepped gable roof. The great proportion of the homes of the gentry were of the latter class. Love of natural scenery was then an unborn emotion, and therefore they were usually erected in situations where they were sheltered from the blasts that swept across the unprotected land, in a hollow or by the side of a hill, which, looking south, got all the sunshine; for, the owners being utterly heedless of any beauty of position, and quite indifferent to the picturesque, the backs of the houses might be turned deliberately to a lovely river, or the house built within a stone-throw of a fine prospect, which occupants could not see, quite content with gazing upon some bare and ugly moor.[1] Though the land was generally barren of woods, without hedge or tree far as the eye could reach, round many country houses in the lowlands, especially in the Lothians, clumps of trees planted for shelter—ash, elm, sycamore—clustered so close to the walls that they blocked out light and air from the small narrow windows, with their tiny three-cornered panes of glass. Yet, though it had been an old practice in counties which were better cultivated to rear bands of trees for protection from the storm, most country houses were still entirely exposed, because the practice of planting round the houses set in after the Revolution, and only became common after the Union, when the eyes of Scots gentlemen were opened to English ways.[2] Beside the house was the inevitable dovecot—a tower of masonry, from which

[1] Ramsay's *Scotland and Scotsmen*, ii. 100.

[2] It is a common mistake to date the practice of planting round mansions from the Union, for it was of much older period in the Lothians and more cultivated counties. *Sheriffdom of Renfrewshire and Lanarkshire compiled in* 1710, by W. Hamilton of Wishaw, 1731; Crawford's *Description of Renfrewshire*, 1720; Kirke's *Account of Tour in Scotland in* 1677. After the Revolution it became

came the devastating clouds of pigeons to fill themselves on the meagre crops of the tenant, and afterwards to fill the larder of the laird.[1] In few places were there lawns or avenues to add amenity, and the fields were ploughed up to the front door or gate of the little court. The courtyard at the homes of smaller lairds was usually formed by the house having a projecting granary and byre on one side, a projecting stable and barn on the other, while in the open space stood the midden, in which the midden-fowls feasted and nursed their broods among nettles and docks growing all around. Behind or beside each house, in the ill-kept and neglected garden, grew a great variety of shrubs and flowers, partly for pleasure, but mainly for use. Many a flower was there, once familiar and loved, which has long been uprooted from our borders and our memories, whose very names are forgotten save the few enshrined in old songs.[2] Beside the familiar holyhock, pink, columbine, and primrose, were the virgin's-bower, campion, throat-wort, bear's-ears, wall-pellitory, and spider-wort—these for show, for scent and colour. Others were there as "sweet herbs," used for cooking or for physic—the pennyroyal, clary, rosemary, sweet-basil, fennel, beside the sage, mint, and wild-marjoram. But no country garden was complete without its plentiful stock of "physick herbs," which were always used for simples, gargarisms, confections, and vomitories, in the primitive pharmacopœia of the age. There were found the hysop, camomile, and hore-hound, cat-mint, elacampine, blessed thissell, stinking arag, rue and celandine, which were in constant request in time of sickness.[3] Among vegetables many of our commonest were not found, as they only came into use or cultivation later in the century. Turnips—or "neeps," as

more common. "Noblemen have of late run into planting, parking, and gardening."—Macky's *Journey through Scotland*, 1729, p. 272; Ramsay, ii. 100; *Spalding Miscellany*, ii. 97.

[1] In Fifeshire at the end of the century there were 320 dovecots belonging to mansions, and these, containing 36,000 pairs of breeding pigeons, were estimated to consume 4000 or 5000 bolls of grain every year. Besides these there were the ruins of many disused other dovecots, which in the early part of the century had abounded.—Thomson's *Agriculture of Fifeshire*.

[2] Reid's *Scots Gardner*, 1683, p. 109.

[3] Moncrieff of Tippermalloch's *Poor Man's Physician*, 3rd edition, 1731.

they were always called—were only in a few gardens; onions were in none, being all imported from Holland or Flanders; and only at the residences of a few rich and enterprising gentlemen were potatoes grown. Round the gardens, with their orchards, grew the nursery of trees, which were carefully nourished and sheltered under the delusion that they were too delicate to bear exposure in the open fields.

So much for the exterior of the houses. Within doors, arrangements were of the plainest and furniture was rude. The rooms were low-ceiled, the joists and beams often covered with deal boards, the walls with their dingy plaster often void of adornment—paper-hangings being as yet unknown,—though in large mansions the walls were covered with tapestry, arras, panels of wood, or gilt leather.[1] The windows had no sash or pulley; the rooms had no bell-pulls; and though on the dining-table lay the hand-bell, it was seldom used, because a poker or a heel was quite sufficient to summon the domestics, with a knock audible through unlathed walls and undeafened floors. No carpets covered these floors, and, indeed, even after the middle of the century many houses of pretension remained without them, except in the public rooms.[2] The bedrooms rarely had grates, the fuel of turf or peat being kindled on the wide open hearth; and few of the chambers were what were called "fire-rooms," most of them being destitute of fireplaces. The beds were closed like a box in the wall, or in recesses with sliding doors, which imprisoned and stifled the sleeper; others stood out in the room[3] with curtains of plaiding which the household had spun, as protection from the cold and draughts which came from ill-jointed windows and doors with ill-fitting "snecks." As houses were incommodious and hospitality was exuberant, it was usual for two gentlemen or two ladies, however unknown

[1] Ramsay, ii. 98, etc.

[2] "I have been told that 60 or 70 years ago (*i.e.* 1756) no more than two carpets existed in the whole town of Jedburgh."—Somerville's *Own Life*, p. 337. A friend told Ramsay of Ochtertyre that when a boy at Edinburgh he saw the first carpet at the house of Sir Thomas Nicholson, who had lived much abroad (Ramsay, ii. 98). At Cawdor House in 1716 only the "king's room" had a carpet (*Thanes of Cawdor*, 418).

[3] In great houses the beds were not in the wall, but had these heavy hangings.

to each other they might be, to sleep together, lying overwhelmed with the burden of from six to ten pair of Scots blankets. Even in the drawing-room it was usual to have a closed bed, which was used by the guests.[1] Excepting on state occasions the dining-room in average-sized country houses was unused, left dark, dull, and musty, unventilated by the sashless windows, while dingy ancestral portraits stared vacantly on the empty apartment from their black frames. It was in the bedroom the family lived chiefly. There they took their meals, there they saw their friends, there at night the family gathered round the hearth, with its high-polished brass grate, which stood detached from the back and sides of the fireplace ornamented with tiles. There the girls spun, and lads learned the rules of Despauter's *Latin Grammar;* and only after "family exercises" did the household disperse, and the heads of the family were left to rest and to sleep in the exhausted air.

People rose early in these old days in both town and country, for the temptation was small to sit up late at night when there were few and very dull books to read, and few mortals who cared to read them, even if the room had not been sombre in the dim gleam of tallow candles. By five or six o'clock the laird was up, having taken his "morning"—a glass of ale or brandy, over which he reverently said a grace, which was brief when he was alone, and longer when he was in company—before he visited his "policy," and his stable and fields.[2] When breakfast was served, at eight o'clock, he was ready for the substantial fare of "skink" or water gruel, supplemented by collops or mutton, aided with ale.[3] The bread consisted of oatmeal cakes or barley bannocks: wheaten bread was scarce, and rarely used except as a dainty. At

[1] Somerville, p. 333. "July 7, 1703, to James Gourlay for ye two snecks to ye bed in the drawing-room, 14s."—*Account Book of Foulis of Ravelston*, p. 329. In 1745, in Inverness, there was only one house which contained a room without a bed—that in which Prince Charles lodged. In 1716 the "inventar" of Cawdor Castle mentions the "mid-chamber or drawing-room" having an "arras hanging and a bed of brown cloath curtains" (*Thanes of Cawdor*, p. 418).

[2] Ramsay's *Scotland and Scotsmen*, ii. 67.

[3] Somerville, p. 330. Between 1680 and 1730 "no mention of wheaten bread in use except among the wealthy."—Hector's *Judicial Records of Renfrewshire.*

twelve or at one o'clock came dinner, at which the master of the house, hat on head, presided in his high-backed chair. Plain and monotonous was the fare at a meal which was ill-served and worse cooked, and all put on table at once, except with persons of great rank and wealth, who had two courses. Each person was served with a wooden or a pewter plate; and only when the dinner hours were later and two courses were introduced did china or earthenware plates appear to suit the more fashionable habits.[1]

The food consisted incessantly of broth, or kail, of beef or mutton, the broth being made of "groats," which were oats stripped of their husks at the mill, or of bear or barley which had been beaten at the knocking-stone in the morning, and hence known as "knockit bear," for as yet barley mills were not introduced into Scotland.[2] Only in summer or autumn could fresh meat be had; for, as all the cattle were kept under cover during winter and spring, and fed on straw or mashed whins, the flesh of the half-starved emaciated brutes was utterly worthless as food.[3] To obtain a supply for store at Martinmas, therefore, the "mart" was killed; each household had cows and sheep slaughtered and salted sufficient to last till next May; and on this salted

[1] Among household accounts in the *Roses of Kilravock* in 1706 is one from the pewterer at Edinburgh for "broth trenchers, 2 dozen English trenchers, assets of English peuther" (p. 394). Somerville, p. 336. In the "Inventar" of Thunderton in 1708 there are only 6 broth plates, 12 flesh plates, 12 white and blue "leam" (*i.e.* loam or earthen) plates; the rest are "timber" or pewter (Dunbar's *Social Life in Former Days in Morayshire*, p. 205). *Hist. of Carluke*, p. 18.

[2] Ramsay, ii. 70; Somerville, p. 332. Mrs. Calderwood of Polton, patriotic in her dishes, her sentiments, and her sense of smell, comments disparagingly on the fare in London in 1756: "As for their victualls they make such a work about I cannot enter into the taste of them, or rather I think they have no taste to enter into. The meat is juicy enough, but has so little taste that if you shut your eyes you will not know by either taste or smell what you are eating. The lamb and veall are blanched in water. The smell of dinner will never intimate what it is on table. No such effluvia as beef or cabbadge was ever found in London"—the last sentence written evidently with a glow of national superiority, p. 33. The culinary art of Holland cannot make up to this excellent lady for the absence of Scots dishes: "I thought I had not got a dinner since I left home for want of broath," p. 52 (*Journey*).

[3] "For half the year in many towns of Scotland there is no beef or mutton to be seen in their shambles, and if any, it is like carrion meat, yet dearer than ever I saw in England."—*Essays on Ways and Means of Enclosing*, p. 131.

meat, with pitiless monotony, day by day and month after month, families patiently subsisted until the cattle, having returned to pasture, were restored to health, and they could get fresh beef again. Besides this stale diet there were the "kain" hens, which formed part of the laird's rent from his tenants—food which became not less intolerably tiresome to the palate. Some relief was found occasionally in muir-fowl and other game, which abounded in the moors in days when poachers were unknown.[1] Vegetables were not served on table, potatoes and turnips being almost unattainable; and the "neeps" or parsnips and greens were only used as ingredients in the kail. Sweets there were none; dessert was unknown. To accompany this simple but not attractive repast, there was strong ale in ample supply, and sometimes sack or claret, which was good and cheap at a shilling the chopin when it came duty-free from France. To serve for the family, there was in many a household only one glass or tankard, which was handed on to the next person in succession as each finished his draught.[2]

At seven or eight o'clock came supper—a substantial meal of the dinner type, with ale and claret. But before that repast was the essential "four hours," the name being derived from the time of refreshment in every house from the highest to the lowest. Ladies took their ale and wine; and if there were guests, as a delicacy a few slices of wheaten bread were cut and handed with cake to the company. Tea during the first quarter of the century was a rarity and a precious luxury, of which friends would send a pound from abroad as a costly gift.[3] When green tea sold at 25s. and Bohea at 30s. a pound, it was beyond the reach of frugal fortunes. In time,

[1] The consumption of "kain" poultry was a burden to the palate by its iteration. It being said that the best way to keep Lent would be to eat what was least agreeable, a stout Episcopalian said he would therefore keep Lent on kain hens (Ramsay, ii. 69).

[2] In reference to this practice Mr. Adam Petrie gives admirable advice: "Be sure to wipe your mouth before you drink, and when you drink hold in your breath till you have done. I have seen some colour the glass with their breath, which is certainly very loathsome to the company."—*Rules of Good Deportment*, 1720.

[3] Somerville, p. 329. In accounts at Thunderton in 1709-10 loaf-sugar was 1s. 6d. a pound; green tea, £1 : 5s.; a pound of coffee beans, 7s. 6d. (Dunbar's

however, it became more attainable through the enterprise of smugglers, and the common people could buy it for three or four shillings from the shop, or from the cadger, who had in his creels supplies drawn from a mysterious source on which silence was prudently kept.

The fashion of tea-drinking, becoming common about 1720, had to make its way against vehement opposition. The patriotic condemned tea as a foreign drink hurtful to national industry; the old-fashioned protested against it as a new-fangled folly; the robust scorned it as an effeminate practice; magistrates, ministers, and energetic laymen put it in the same malignant category as smuggled spirits, anathematised its use by the poor, among whom (they warned them) it would assuredly produce "corruption of morals and debility of constitution."[1] It is not surprising that men like Lord President Forbes should denounce the "vile drug" with special energy. It was a contemptible beverage to him and his brother "Bumper John." They had been "the most plentiful drinkers in the north," and in Culloden House had had the custom of prizing off the top of each successive cask of claret, and placing it in the hall to be emptied in pailfuls.[2]

By 1729 Mackintosh of Borlum laments the sadly changed times. "When I came to my friend's house of a morning, I used to be asked if I had my morning draught yet? I am now asked if I have had my tea? And in lieu of the big

Social Life, p. 195). In 1705 green tea was advertised as sold at 16s. and Bohea at 30s. a pound by George Scott, goldsmith, Luckenbooths, who sold chocolate at 3s. 6d. (Chambers' *Traditions*, i. 13).

[1] Medical men regarded tea with disfavour. Commended in lethargic diseases, headaches, gouts, and gravel, it was considered hurtful to weak constitutions if much used, "causing tremblings and shakings of the head and hands, loss of appetite, vapours, and other nervous diseases."—Alston's *Lectures on Materia Medica*, 1770, ii. 234. Even in 1793 a minister mourns that "the views of the capital are beginning to spread among the people, and the introduction of these baneful articles to the poor of tea and whisky will soon produce the corruption of morals and debility of constitution which are so severely felt in every parish, and will soon materially impair the real strength and population of Scotland."—Currie, *Stat. Acct. of Scotland.*

[2] Forbes of Culloden uttered his contempt of tea vigorously in *Culloden Papers*, p. 180; *Some Considerations on the present State of Scotland*, 1743 (by Duncan Forbes); Burton's *Lives of Lovat and Forbes*, p. 368; Omond's *Lord Advocates*, i. 320. £40 of claret was drunk in one month, when the highest price was 16s. or 18s. a dozen.

quaigh with strong ale and toast, and after a dram of good, wholesome Scots spirits, there is now the tea-kettle put to the fire, the tea-table and silver and china equippage brought in, and marmalade and cream." In spite of all scorn, by 1750 the most stalwart and conservative had succumbed to its attractions, and tea (tempered with brandy) took the place of ale as a necessity at every breakfast-table.[1]

The spirit of these old days was eminently hospitable, and exuberantly hearty. Living in the country, where occupation was dull and amusements were few, and intercourse with the outer world was impeded by lack of roads, the gentry found the sight of friends extremely welcome. Neighbours were wont to come, "without sending word," on horse-back; and in the effusiveness of hospitality there was shown a "pressing" of guests to stay to eat and to drink, which it was a meanness to omit and offence to resist.[2] The bashful ate till full to repletion; the amiable and obsequious fed in meek compliance; the stalwart only dared to refuse, and the prudent saved themselves by keeping something always on their plate. There was in this friendly intercourse no display, and no change in food was made or was possible to make. Then, as always, were the inevitable dishes—broth, beef, and hens.[3] All that was requisite was to have enough for all; and neighbours considerately arrived in ample time to allow of an extra supply being cooked by one o'clock. They were taken round the "policy" to pass the hour, while the servant looked for the dog that turned the spit, which cunningly hid himself whenever he perceived by culinary preparations that his disagreeable services would be required;

[1] [Mackintosh of Borlum's] *Essay on Ways and Means of Enclosing*, etc., 1729, p. 232.

[2] Mrs. Calderwood's *Journey*, p. 227; Somerville, p. 369; Ramsay, ii. 67.

[3] Only in the highest and wealthiest classes were there two courses. At the table of the Duchess of Buccleugh and Monmouth in 1701 were present the family, Lords Rothes, Haddington, Elcho, and three gentlemen. Dinner, 1st course—300 oysters, bacon, and pease pottage, haggis with calf's pluck, beef, collops, mutton roasted, 3 joints, fricassée of 5 chickens, and roasted goose; 2nd course—5 wild fowl, 5 chickens, buttered crabs, tarts, 4 roasted hares (at officers' table, beef, 2 joints, 2 roasted rabbits). At supper—Joint of mutton, roasted rabbits. Breakfast—2 joints in collops, 4 quarters of roasted lamb, 2 roasted capons.—Arnot's *Edinburgh*, p. 200.

and soon the guests heard the familiar sound of screeching which they recognised too well as intimately connected with their approaching meal. Ale was the chief beverage in which they indulged at dinner and supper; but there was claret too, which was served in pewter stoups. The glasses might be few, but the drink was plentiful, and when days of refinement came old topers mourned over these departed times when "there were fewer glasses and more bottles." By 1730 there had come changes which worthies deplored. So the laird of Borlum again laments that, though incomes had become no larger, customs had become more expensive. "Formerly I had been served with two or three substantial dishes of beef, mutton, and fowl, garnished with their own wholesome gravy. I am now served up little expensive ashets with English pickles, Indian mangoes, and anchovy sauces. . . . In lieu of the good substantial large flagon or quart stoup from the barrel, there comes to the by-table a basket or armful of bottles; and if the ale is never so strong, old, and pale, it is seldom good enough for the second service without a glass of claret. If the wine is not out or bad there must be at least bottles a piece of it; if it is out or bad there must be a snaker of sack or brandy punch." At all which gross extravagance this "lover of his country," as he styles himself, has his patriotic soul vexed within him.

II

Rough and rude were the manners of the early part of the century, as well as the fare.[1] No carving knife or fork

[1] *Rules of Good Deportment*, by Adam Petrie, Edinburgh, 1720.—"Do not sip your drink in taking 3 or 4 draughts of it. Do not lick your fingers nor dirty your napkins. If you are obliged to eat off one dish let your superiors begin. It is rude to take snuff at table when others are eating, for the particles of it being driven from the nose by the breath is most unpleasant. I have known some drive it the breadth of the whole table. Servants should not scratch or shrug their shoulders, nor appear with dirty hands, nor lean on their master's chair." Petrie, led by the success of his manual of etiquette, published his *Rules of Good Deportment for Church Officers* (1730), in which there is much good sense, and dedicated it to Sir Hew Dalrymple, Lord President, "as a testimony of my respect to your lordship for being so kind in speaking always (when occasion offered) favourably of my book of manners."

was employed, the host dividing the meat with his own; and when the more refined implements came into use, Lord Auchinleck sneered at the new-fangled superfine fashion. Those at table took the succulent bones in their fingers and picked them carefully—a practice which gave occasion to the custom in certain households of handing water in a basin for each person to clean his hands after the meal.[1] The guests were apt to convey their food to their mouths at the end of their knives—a Scots practice which provoked the wrath of Catherine, Duchess of Queensberry (Prior's "Kitty beautiful and young"), who was wont to shriek out in agony as she watched her country friends at Drumlanrig performing their accustomed operation; and, beseeching them not to cut their throats, her imperious Grace would send a servant with a spoon and fork on a salver to their rescue and rebuke.[2] In 1720 Mr. Adam Petrie, tutor, "stickit minister," and schoolmaster, published his charmingly naïve *Rules of Good Deportment for the Use of Youth*, wherein he gave admirable advice on manners which he had himself picked up when acting as chaplain to a family of good degree. His manual strikes us as somewhat rudimentary in its principles; but doubtless in his own day his counsels came to many as a flash of revelation. Solemnly he gives his important rules: "You must drink out your glass that others may not have your blown drink, and do it with as little noise as possible," for one glass had to pass round the company; "do not gnaw your bones too clean"; "it is indecent to fill the mouth too full; such cramming is more suitable for a beast than a rational creature"; "be sure to throw nothing on the floor; it is uncivil and disobliging"; "it is rude to suck your meat out of a spoon with an ungrateful noise"; "to wipe the nose or sweat off the face with a table napkin is most rude." In this manner does this worthy and obsequious pedagogue—for it must be owned he

[1] Petrie's *Rules of Good Deportment*.—"When water is presented after meat, you may, after your superiors have begun, dip the corner of your napkin in the water, and wipe your mouth with it, holding the other end of your napkin between you and the company, that you may do it as imperceptibly as you can, and then rub your fingers, holding your hands down upon your knees. Superiors may do it more openly."

[2] Chambers' *Traditions of Edinburgh*, i. 295.

is obsequious even to grovelling before "superiors"—at once incite the youth of his time to good deportment, and suggest to us that the deportment of his age stood in considerable need of amendment.

In simple and unpretentious establishments the frugality of the dining-room was repeated in the kitchen. Even in houses of high position the women servants went without shoes or stockings, clad in short worsted petticoats or dresses of coarse plaiding. Their wages were about 15s. to 20s. a year, supplemented by a gown or a pair of shoes, which were chiefly worn on Sunday at kirk. Even in mansions of people of rank the cook was paid between £2 and £3, and the housekeeper, like the chaplain, had £5 a year. Only gentlemen of fortune had men servants, who had as wages about £2 a year and a suit of gaudy livery to wear out.[1] The nobleman driving in his lumbering coach, brought over from Holland, had two of these men to stand behind armed with long poles, which might any moment be called into request when the vehicle capsized in some deep rut or over a huge stone; the "running footman," with a staff, went on in front to see that the road was clear, and as the coach with six horses slowly proceeded his difficulty was not to keep pace with it, but to avoid so far outstripping it as to lose sight of it in the distance far behind.[2] In more moderate style, the laird when he went a journey took with him one of his labouring men, who rode behind carrying the cloak bag; and the ladies rode on pillions or on their own nags, a bag or a little portmanteau easily containing their simple wardrobe for a visit.

The tedium of the country needed its diversion, and gentlemen of the richer class indulged in hawking with eagerness, and at home had their games at bowls, for a bowling-green was the usual adjunct to every country-house. Not yet had the taste for planting spread among the lairds; and the enclosing of land and rearing of hedges—the plants being imported from Holland—was only the hobby of the few

[1] House servants at Cawdor in 1716:—Chaplain, 100 merks; butler, 60; cook, 60; "cotchman," 30; 2 footmen, 50; 2 gentlemen, 150; and chamber-maid, dairy and byre women, each 15; the gardener, 12 bolls; shepherd, 5 bolls; maltman, 10 bolls.—*Thanes of Cawdor* (Spalding Club).

[2] Chambers' *Threiplands of Fingask.*

enterprising "improvers." They loved, however, to raise trees around their mansions, and to form them in clusters to shield them from the winds. This planting was, indeed, done sparingly and cautiously; and, comparing their very humble efforts to rear saplings with the lavish ventures of a later generation, we find something touching in the simple records of old account books of the time, recording the tiny orders sent to the one nurseryman in Edinburgh and the minute sums expended[1] for "a pund of ackorns," "a pund of beitch masts," "2 ounces of silver fir seed," "4 ounces of pitch pine." Imagining that it was no use planting many a stalwart sort of forest tree in the open land, where they believed it was certain to be killed by the frost, they reared them only in warm nooks round the house, or in the garden and orchard; and accordingly, in old household books, seeds of walnut, chestnut, and sycamore are called "garden seeds." Wealthier proprietors, whose eyes had been charmed by the fantastic and ingenious grounds at Dutch residences, when they had been in exile at the Hague before the Revolution, began at their seats to make gardens with prim beds and curious labyrinthine mazes, alleys of yew and cedar, holly and laurel.[2] They cut their shrubs into quaint shapes of animals, pagodas, hats, and urns; they made the tortured shrubs form tortuous paths; and dearly they loved to lead their friends, before dinner was ready, through the lanes, which took an hour to traverse and only covered one acre of ground, deriving unmitigated satisfaction at watching their courteous neighbour's fiftieth-time well-simulated surprise at losing himself in the maze and suddenly finding himself at the gate.[3] These whim-

[1] "1707.—To 2 pund ackorns to sett at Woodhall, 12s. (Scots)"; "To a pund of beitch masts, £1 10s. (Scots)."—*Account Book of Foulis of Ravelston*, p. 447. Dunbar's *Social Life*, p. 148. Amongst seeds ordered for Cawdor Castle in 1736, "1 lb. of ackorns, Flanders onions, and Dutch parsneeps."—*Book of Thanes of Cawdor*, p. 425.

[2] *Scots Gardner*, by J. Reid, 1683.

[3] *Arniston Memoirs:* Scott's *Miscellaneous Works: Periodical Criticism* (Landscape Gardening), etc., v. 88. In the early style, everything, lawns, gardens, must be symmetrical and arranged in geometrical figures into parallels and triangles. The house must be the centre to which all walks, trees, and hedges converge: "as the sun is the centre of the world, as the heart is the centre of the man, as the nose is the centre of the face, and it is unseemly to see a man wanting a leg, ane

sical horticultural puzzles, the stiff prim parterres—marvels of "topiarian" art which had seemed ideals of art and of beauty,—lasted in fashion for many a day. By the latter part of the century, however, the grotesque old yews and hollies had become neglected; they forgot what manner of beast and object they once had been, having become tangled and shapeless; and when after 1760 a newly-created admiration for nature had arisen, the old shrubs were uprooted, the borders, where amid the weeds the intricate geometrical forms could still be traced, were ruthlessly dug up, and old formal designs changed to the "admired disorder" of nature.

With incomes small and tastes simple, gentry dressed in a plain, homely, and even coarse way. At home, or even to kirk and market, a gentleman went about in homespun clothing and home-made woollen shirt,[1] which had been spun by his wife, family and servants, and woven by the village "wabster." When, in later days, their sons, who had seen a little of the world in Edinburgh, or had studied in Leyden or Paris, despised the rude garments of their elders, and began to wear Holland material for shirts, the old men were only induced to put the luxurious stuff on their shoulders and arms above the homely woollen, which they changed but seldom. Not less simple in their ways were the ladies, who spun the material of much of their clothing and made it into dresses at home. If they bought material, it was country-woven, and a lady of rank was quite satisfied to get a "Musselburgh stuff" gown by the carrier at the cost of 8s.[2] Day by day in kitchen and room there was heard the flutter of the

arm, etc., or his nose standing on one side of his face or not straight . . . just so with a man's house, gardens, courts, if regularity is not observed."—*Scots Gardner*, 1683. Carlyle's *Autobiography*, p. 7.

[1] Maxwell of Munches' Recollections of 1720 in Murray's *Literary History of Galloway;* Macky's *Journey through Scotland*, 1729, p. 271.

[2] "Table and body linen seldom changed and but coarse, except for extraordinary occasions, moving necks and sleeves of better kind being then used only by the best."—*Spalding Miscellany*, i. p. 97. (Sir Alex. Grant of Monymusk's *Recollections of about* 1720.) *Caldwell Papers*, i. 260. When Drummond of Blair was congratulated on the accomplishments of his son, the old man replied that he knew nothing his son had learned on his travels but "to cast a sark every day and to eat his kail twice"—alluding to the customary method of all "supping" their broth from the same dish.—Ramsay, ii. 65.

rock and reel, till these gave way about 1730 to the whir of the spinning-wheel, making the yarn of the wool and linen till the amount of plaiding and linen filled every press and box, sufficient to "plenish" the homes of a dozen brides, whose part it was to bring a full store of napery to their husbands' houses. Plain and demure of dress as the lairds and their families might be at home, gentlefolks had their bright and gay costume, which was seen in its full glory at baptisms, marriages, and (in the early days of the century) at burials. While the plain-living and quiet-fashioned were content to go to kirk in the black kelt coat of their ladies' making, others, though they went about in the morning in greasy night-caps, coats out at elbows, and dirty night or dressing-gowns,[1] in public appeared in their coat and waistcoat trimmed with silver or gold, their silk stockings and jack-boots, with periwig or Ramilies wig, surmounted by the laced three-cornered hat. The ladies of fashion sallied forth in their hoops, which in Queen Anne's time were four or five yards in circumference, covered with dress of silk or petticoats of velvet or silk bound with gold or silver lace, pinners on their heads of brocade or costly lace of Flanders.[2] But however desirous to be in fashion, every Scots lady had that essential part of national costume, the plaid, wrapped loosely about the head and body, made either of silk or of wool with a silken lining of bright green or scarlet, while the common people wore their gaudy-coloured plaids of coarse worsted. These plaids were the ordinary costume of the ladies, as characteristic and national as the mantillas of Spain, up to the middle of the century, when at last they gave way to silk and velvet cloaks.[3] About 1725 and 1730 the homely ways were being broken in upon. The younger men, by contact with the Scottish capital,

[1] Somerville, p. 329 ; Ramsay, ii. 84.

[2] A flowing periwig was a costly article. Foulis of Ravelston pays in 1704 for "a new long perwig 7 guineas and a halfe" ; a dress-wig cost him only £14 : 6s. Scots, or a guinea ; a new hat £7 Scots ; a bob-wig, a guinea.—*Account Books*, pp. 325, 362. In 1734 a bob-wig is £1 : 10s ; cue-wig, ribbons and rose, £1 : 10s.—*Roses of Kilravock* (Spalding Club), p. 410.

[3] Burt's *Letters*, i. 82 ; Macky's *Journey through Scotland*, p. 276. Allan Ramsay in his "Tartana" deprecates any change in the favourite national costume (*Poems*, ii. 87) ; Ramsay, ii. 88.

or even by acquaintance with continental life, where they spent two or three years studying law or medicine at Utrecht, Leyden, or Paris, had acquired other tastes. When abroad they had patriotically vaunted the superiority of everything Scottish; when they returned they surperciliously lauded everything foreign. "I find," says that most shrewd lady, Mrs Calderwood of Polton, "I find it is the truest way of obtaining to the philosophical principle of despising everything in the world, first to send a young man abroad to despise the Continent, and to bring him back to despise his own island."[1] These young men of *mode* winced under the old rough habits of dress and society at home, and tried to assume a finer style, displaying their new fashions, their red stockings and red-heeled shoes, much to the scandal of the older generation, who thought it was the road to ruin. To quote again our Laird of Borlum: "Where I saw the gentleman, lady and children dressed clean and neat in home-spun stuffs of her own sheep's growth and women's spinning, I see now the ladies dressed in French and Italian silks and brocades and the laird and his son in English broadcloth."[2] But, in extenuation of this extravagance, it must be considered that ladies' dresses did not in Scotland last so short a time as nowadays: fashions did not then change so rapidly that a style and shape admired in one season became the "fright" and atrocity of the next. The dress which a Scots lady wore when middle age had come upon her had probably been part of her wedding trousseau, and ever since had been put on with care, "put past" with caution, aired with anxiety, and worn with ceremony.[3] Two suits or costumes formed the

[1] Mrs. Calderwood's *Journey*, p. 118.

[2] *Essay on Enclosing*, etc., p. 232.—"In every mouth we hear 'The country is mightily improved since the Union.' And if you ask wherein, you are told, 'If I don't see how much more handsomely the gentry live now than before the Union in dress, table and house furniture? . . . This epidemick, this increase of spending—but to be modish and well-bred, I ought to have said this new improvement—has in these 20 years strangely over-run the nation in the very remotest corners" (p. 235).

[3] Ramsay, ii. 90. In richer families the outfitting was on a scale then deemed handsome. When the daughter of the Laird of Kilravock was married the "marriadge" bill cost £66 sterling, including "floured silk stuff at 13s. 6d., grien galloons, whit persian taffety for gown or cot at 7s. 6d., laced shoes at 5s., green silk shaggrin for tryming at 6s., a mask at 2s. 4d., and patches at 1s."—*Roses of Kilravock*, p. 390. The tocher was 9000 merks.

wardrobe of a lady for long years, even in Edinburgh society. Young ladies, daughters of gentlemen of good position and means, were content with one silk gown, and occasional use of the mother's, which she had got when she was as young as they.

Fortunately, in the early decades of the century, fashions did not alter with bewildering swiftness even in England: years passed by without any striking change in the modes of the day.[1] Queen Anne cared little for style, and retained in her dull court the costumes of William and Mary. George I., leaving his uncomfortable consort in Hanover, imported his two favourites, who were too obscure and stupid to lead any society, and too ugly—the one too lean, the other too fat—to follow any fashion. And so habits and dresses then, and under George II., had transformations few and slow. Even if they had changed, it would after all have made little difference—it took long time for the ways of London to reach provincial seats of Scotland, and for country tailors to copy the newest modes of St. James's. What greater evidence of the simplicity and frugality of the period can there be than in the fact that millinery was almost an unknown occupation in Scotland, and that in Edinburgh in 1720 there was only one milliner for its fashionable circles.[2] When ladies were not able to frame dresses for themselves, it was the occupation of tailors to make them, and these tradesmen resented and resisted the encroachments of mantua-makers on their business and what they deemed their legal privileges. In rural districts the tailor came with his apprentices on his rounds to every house, made up the stuff into suits for the young gentlemen and dresses for the ladies, being paid his 2d. or 3d. a day and food. Materials were not easy to be got, for the shopkeepers of country towns, in their little earth-floored, dark, thatched houses, had little room for varied wares, and little capital

[1] Fairholt's *History of Costume*, 1860, pp. 287, 293.

[2] Ramsay, i. 163. The tailors of Perth prosecuted mantua-makers as intruders on monopoly got from William the Lion of making men's and women's apparel. They lost their suit. Boswell, afterwards Lord Auchinleck, was counsel for the milliners. The Elgin tailor's bill to the Laird of Thunderton in 1719 shows that he made "stiched night-gowns," and for her ladyship "scarlet clocks and stitched stees."—Dunbar's *Social Life*, p. 195.

wherewith to set up a stock, and few customers to buy it. It was therefore usually by the carrier conveying goods in sacks on horseback from the distant city that the long-waited-for stuff was sent. For in those days even the carriers between Edinburgh and Glasgow had baskets or creels for their parcels on either side of the horse, while they sat between. Packmen came round with their wallets containing a strictly limited assortment of wares for cottage and mansion.[1] Travelling weavers arrived every now and then to buy from ladies and cottage women the yarn they had made, and to sell to them in exchange tempting webs for the household. Thus the quaint homely life went on.

III

When boys were old enough they were sent to the parish school, or to the nearest grammar school, where the Latinity was better, though the class of scholars was the same. Thither at six or seven o'clock in the morning they trudged, carrying their dinner with them, and not returning till evening, for the school hours were portentously long. Often the sons of great houses boarded with the teacher of the burgh school; lodging, food, and education cost but a few pounds.[2] In fine fraternity boys of all ranks met in wholesome rivalry. The son of the nobleman and the son of the carpenter sat in the same room, and had the same instruction; the tenant and the laird alike paid half a crown or three shillings a quarter for their boys' tuition at the burgh school, and the laced clothes of the lord's heir were soon as shabby and as little regarded as the ragged clothes of the blacksmith's son. Roughness, vulgarities of tone and manner, were doubtless the results of this promiscuous association, all speaking the same broad Scots tongue. But much was rubbed off when youths went to college and entered society. Otherwise, a boor the lad began, and a boor

[1] *Glasgow Past and Present*, ii. 69.

[2] Ramsay, ii. 57; *Arniston Memoirs;* Sir John Clerk of Penicuik's *Memoirs.* William Murray and his brother were boarded by their father, Lord Stormont, in 1717, with the Master of Perth Burgh School—the quarterly payment and board for the two boys being £60 Scots (or about £5).—Campbell's *Lives of Chief Justices*, 1874, iii. 166.

he ended.[1] The friendly contact in boyhood, like the friendly intercourse of the laird with his people, and the lady with her servants over the spinning, wrought a kindliness and attachment to the family, which was a marked and pleasant feature in old stay-at-home Scottish society. The intimate acquaintance of even ladies of high rank and family with the ways, the talk, the customs, the sentiments of the people, shows itself most strikingly in the songs, so steeped in Scottish life and spirit, written by the high born—Lady Anne Lindsay, Mrs. Cockburn, Lady Nairne—in much later period. It was not without love of, and familiar association with, the common folk that any one could write "Auld Robin Gray," the "Laird o' Cockpen," "Robin Adair." Yet, with all this familiarity, there was not lacking respect for the family of the "big house." The gentleman was inseparable in the people's regard from his land, by the name of which the laird was called; while his wife bore the title of "lady," not of "Mrs.," and was spoken of as her "leddyship" in full deference. To be "Mr. and Mrs. Shaw of Balgarran" was a commonplace thing; but to be called "Balgarran" and "My Lady Balgarran" was indeed a satisfaction.

The education of girls was more rudimentary, far more practical than intellectual or artistic; to sew, to knit, to spin, were the chief accomplishments for a lady's hands. To read, to write—both very badly—to play a little on the viol or virginal, and do some tambour work, were the highest feminine achievements. At home a chaplain probably taught the infantile lessons, and sometimes acted as tutor and examined in the Scriptures and Catechism. If a governess was required she could be got cheap; that she was extremely ignorant was a mere matter of detail. For five pounds sterling and a frock an instructor of youth and all educational requirements could be hired for the highest families; and she was quite acceptable although she knew nothing of literature or languages, and could not even write or spell respectably in her own tongue. The Lady Thunderton in 1710, for example, accepts

[1] "The school fees at Dunse when I attended school (1752) were for reading, 1s.; for reading and writing, 1s. 6d.; for Latin, 2s. 6d. per quarter. The same fees were, I believe, charged at Kelso and Hawick."—Somerville's *Own Life*, p. 348.

the services of the lady who applied for her situation, and thus stated her qualifications: "I can sow white and coloured seam, dress head suits, play on treble and 'gambo,' viol, virginal and minicords, at threttie pund [Scots] and gown and coat; or then fourtie pund and shoes and linen." Anxious for the post, this accomplished spinster offers "to serve half a year on trial conform."[1] After acquiring some scraps of misinformation, which left them perfectly ignorant or delightfully erroneous, the daughters were sent to a country town which could boast of a mistress of refined education, where they were cheaply taught, lodged, and boarded;[2] or they were sent to Edinburgh, where, in some lofty flat in the Lawnmarket closes, the requisite branches of polite instruction were taught by a mistress, who, being a poor member of a family of quality, became "a mistress of manners," and took pupils not because she had anything she could teach, but because she had too little income to live on. There from stately lips the girl learned deportment, dancing, knitting, and music; how to handle "gambo" and virginal, to go through a minuet, to carry her fan with grace, to put on her mask with propriety, to sip her tea without making a noise, to sit in her chair without touching the back. When young ladies returned home as "finished" they resumed their household work, relearned its duties and unlearned their lessons, and remained throughout their days uncontaminated by literature.[3] All this Arcadian ignorance made them the

[1] Dunbar's *Social Life*, p. 14.

[2] The fees for education and board in a young lady's school in a country town were modest, though, judging from the spelling and grammar of the receipts, the teaching was short of perfection. The following is a receipt for board and education of two young ladies at Dyke: "Received the soum of four pund Scots, and that for Alex. Dunbar of Belmachedie his two daughters (Meg and Ket), their current quarter colledge fie, as witnes my hand at Dyke the 22nd Dec. 1709, Alex. Nicolson." "Two pound sterlin, and that for Alex. Dunbar of Belmuchitie his daughters Meg and Kett, their quarterlie board, and that by me, Janet Dunbar. In witnes wherof I have subscybed day and date as above written, Janet Dunbar."—Dunbar's *Social Life*, p. 16. Here is the account "to laird of Kilraick for his daughter Margaret's board and education in Edinburgh in 1700. One quarter bord, £60 [Scots]; drawing one quarter, 14s. 10d.; one quarter singing, playing, and virginalls, £11 : 12s.; one quarter writing, £6;" charges also for "satine seame, wax fruitts."—*Roses of Kilravock* (Spalding Club), p. 388.

[3] In *Thanes of Cawdor*, p. 397, is given a lady's library of the more pious type: "Lady Cawdor, her books taken, 18th Sept. 1705—Alain's *Godly Fear*,

more acceptable in society, for a lady so learned as to have read Addison, Steele, and Pope was regarded with trepidation by the men, whose acquaintance with letters was the Sabbath hearing of discourses from Durham, Rutherford, and Flavel of godly memory but ghastly prolixity.

In the old homes in those days life wore a grave and sombre aspect. In Presbyterian families especially was this the case; for the taint of a grim creed and the rigid spirit of the Church was still over the land. It was an age of austerity and probation.[1] Severity was the characteristic of school discipline, which often amounted to brutality, and rigour was the note of all family training, in which the Solomonic maxim against sparing the rod and spoiling the child was orthodoxly followed. As the Church taught that God was constantly punishing His children on earth for their eternal good, parents copied Providence with painful exactitude, and children worked out their domestic salvation with fear and trembling. Authority and fear were the only means to win obedience, and parental love, deep as it must have been, was sternly concealed. This was the prevailing spirit of family life till late in the century. "My children from the youngest to the eldest loves me and fears me as sinners dread death. My look is law."[2] These words of the vigorously-minded Lady Strange express the hard, austere spirit prevailing in many a household and the dismal discipline of every nursery,

Balm of Gilead, Sighs from Hell; Guthrie's *Christian's Great Interest;* Geddes' *Saint's Recreation;* Brown's *Swan Song,* etc., with *Art of Complaisance, Book of Psalmistry, Rules of Civility,*" etc.

[1] The vivid memories of the hard, austere training of old days are found in Miss Mure of Caldwell's *Reminiscences; Caldwell Papers.* Similar were Lady Anne Barnard's impressions: "It was not the system to treat children with tenderness. Everything was done by authority and correction. I have been told by my grandmother that this was so in a still greater degree with the former generation, when no child was allowed to speak before or sit down in company of their parents. This I well remember, that a mother who influenced her children to do right through their affection was at Balcarras reckoned to be unprincipled and careless, and accused of a willingness to save herself trouble if she abolished the rod, and of forgetfulness of the laws of nature by allowing children to look on their parents as their friends and companions."—*Lives of the Lindsays,* ii. 304. To same effect, Somerville's *Life,* p. 348; Fergusson's *Henry Erskine,* p. 62; Lady Minto's *Life of Sir G. Elliot, first Lord Minto,* i. 22.

[2] Dennistoun's *Life of Strange,* i. 309.

the memory of which was burned into many minds that lived to see more genial times. In the household the head of the family was regarded with awe as at table he presided with his hat on, and as he sat in his exclusive seat at the chimney-corner. In his presence the young people spoke in fearful whispers, and stood respectfully before him and answered his questions with humbleness. There was no companionship between them, no confidences, little expression of affection between children and parents. This distance of manner had its inevitable results—pleasures indulged in furtively, mirth which was boisterous beyond parental earshot, speech which was coarse, manners unrefined, and ways that were rustic.

Most families of any station had their chaplains, who had miscellaneous duties and an equivocal position for a salary of £5 "with board and washing," the same wages as were given to the butler and housekeeper in great families.[1] The duties were to conduct family worship, at meals to say graces, which were too long to be said fluently by lairds whose speech was more colloquial than devotional, also to teach the children the Catechism and examine scripturally the servants on the Sabbath. The chaplain was usually a young man studying for the Church, or an elderly probationer who had failed to get one. Besides his religious functions he acted as tutor to the children and made himself generally useful in the family. When at a nobleman's table he knew his part, which was to rise when the table-cloth was removed, and, making obeisance, respectfully to remove himself as well.[2] On Sunday the rules and exercises were pious and fatiguing.[3] The order of the day began at nine o'clock with "exercises" conducted by the chaplain, after which all regularly set forth at ten o'clock to church, returning at half-past twelve. Then followed prayers by the chaplain,

[1] In 1702 Foulis of Ravelston's chaplain has £80 Scots. Many gentlemen still kept chaplains, or "governors," in 1760.—Somerville, p. 363. In the list of "servants' fees" in 1709 is the chaplain at 100 merks at Cawdor House.—*Book of Thanes of Cawdor; Account Book of Sir J. Foulis*, p. 13.

[2] Petrie's *Rules of Good Deportment.*

[3] *Caldwell Papers*, i. 260. Such was the order of the day in the household of Lord Advocate Sir James Stewart of Goodtrees (died 1713).—Omond's *Lord Advocates of Scotland*, i. 279.

succeeded by a little cold meat or an egg—no cooking being allowed—and after the slender repast all returned at two to church.[1] About four or five o'clock they all came back to the house, when each retired to private devotions and meditation, except the children and servants, who were convened by the chaplain and examined in religious knowledge. This lasted till six o'clock, when all sat down to a substantial hot supper, for which long abstinence had prepared them, and they remained at table till eight. Then there followed singing, reading, prayers, conducted by the head of the house. "This," says Miss Mure of Caldwell, "was the common order in all well-regulated houses up to 1730." In the days when the strain of piety was still strong, and the old fervour was still vivid in society, it was the practice to retire at certain hours for private meditation and prayer. Every country house had a special chamber or closet to which the head of the household withdrew ostensibly for pious communion, and even in the houses in Edinburgh flats, scanty as the accommodation was, there was a tiny closet or oratory, lighted dimly through a narrow window.[2] This religious fashion died out with many another old devout habit about the middle of the century, and

[1] In many cases, when the church was far from the laird's (or lord's) residence, he had a cold collation served in the room at the kirk adjoining his "loft." In this room he and his friends lunched or dined "between sermons," the food being carried by the serving-man or brought from the change-house in the village.—Carlyle's *Autobiography*, p. 212. "For bread, eall and brandie at ye kirk, 6 shillings (Scots), Oct. 1706."—*Account Book of Foulis of Ravelston.* In these rooms there were fireplaces, and they were warm, while the church was unheated and miserably cold. Such a private fire was the only possible cause of any Scottish church being burnt, as in case of Borthwick Church. An indignant Episcopalian describes the church at Fintray—built in 1703 by Sir W. Forbes of Craigievar—as "having an aisle for the family wherein there is also a room for their use, and again within it a hearth, cupboard, etc., so that people may eat and drink, and even smoke in it if they will—a profaneness unheard of in antiquity and worthy of the age we live in, for since the Revolution the like liberty has been taken in several churches in the south."—*View of the Diocese of Aberdeen* (Spalding Club), p. 245.

[2] Chambers' *Ancient Architecture of Edinburgh.* When the vivacious and outspoken Mrs. Calderwood of Polton was in Flanders in 1756 she observed pityingly the superstitious ways of the natives—"the maddest ideots about papistry that ever was,"—and she attributes their habit of going to church during the week to "mumell their prayers" to the fact that "there is no closet in any room."—*Journey*, p. 178.

the closets were turned to purposes more secular and probably more sincere.

In the homes of lairds of the Episcopalian persuasion a more genial atmosphere was found, less religious austerity, less Sabbatarian rigour. They took the pleasures of life less sadly, and the enjoyments of earth, dancing, concerts, even theatres, were in their eyes harmless and delightful.[1] In their book-shelves—never very crowded—were secular books, romances and plays, besides decorous history and classics, which no pious Presbyterian would allow to pollute his room. Whilst on Sunday the Presbyterian gentleman took a sparing refection of bread and an egg or cold beef, "between sermons," merely to allay the acute pangs of hunger, reserving his energies and carnal appetite for the supper, the other, after going to his "meeting-house," had a substantial meal at mid-day, having no scruples. Hence it was a common saying that "if you would live well on Sunday you must take an Episcopalian dinner and a Presbyterian supper."[2] Yet many old Episcopalians, especially if they were Jacobites, observed religious fasts and ceremonies as strictly as any high-flying Presbyterian observed his days of humiliation. The Jacobites and non-jurors managed strangely to associate the right divine of the papistical Stuarts with the right divine of Protestant prelacy, and loved to assume great deference for ecclesiastical rules, days, and seasons, more to spite the Whigs than to please their consciences. Christmas was to them a time of reunion, of much family and neighbourly festivity, which lasted during the week which they called *par excellence* the "holidays," though these were contemptuously nicknamed by the others the "daft days." During Lent the straitest of the sect tried their loyal best to fast, which they did by refraining at least from snuff. If they went into a chapel which had been licensed, and therefore recognised the reigning monarch, they would enter the tainted edifice only on condition that when His Hanoverian Majesty was being prayed for they might rise from their knees, on pretext of searching their coat-pockets for their snuff-box, over which

[1] "The Episcopalian ladies are more cheerful in their demeanour than the Presbyterian."—Burt's *Letters*, i. 206.

[2] *Ibid.* i. 204.

they fumbled till the petition for "long life" to his objectionable majesty was ended.[1] Meanwhile the old Presbyterians despised keeping "Yule" as a miserable superstition, approved highly of schoolmistresses who gave parties to their pupils on Good Friday, spoke of the goose as a "superstitious bird";[2] and parish ministers had been known to visit their people in the North, where prelatic follies might linger, on the forenoon of the 25th of December to see and to smell if any erroneous preparations were going on for a better dinner, and any savoury pots were on the fire for a Popish feast.[3]

These Jacobite families had their own customs, their own prejudices, their special loyalties, with which no Whig stranger could meddle. They loved to consort with their own kind, having a political and ecclesiastical creed and antipathy in common, where, as the glass went round, they could pledge the true king and curse the Hanoverian intruder. It was unpleasant in Whig society, when every one gave a health and every one must cheer a sentiment, to save their consciences by secretly passing the bumper across the water-jug, to signify they drank to the king "over the water." Presbyterianism with its gloom, and its ministers with their severity and woeful piety, moved them with wrath or stirred them to mirth. Merriment went round the supper-table as some rollicking voice broke out with the lay of the "Cameronian's (or Presbyterian's) cat,"[4] with its most doleful tragedy:—

> There was a Cameronian cat was hunting for his prey,
> And in the house she catched a mouse, upon the Sabbath day.
>
> The Whig, being offended at such an act profane,
> Laid by his book, his cat he took, and bound it with a chain.
>
> "Assure thyself that for this deed thou blood for blood shalt pay,
> For killing of the Lord's own mouse, upon the Sabbath day."
>
> And straight to execution poor baudrons he was drawn,
> And high hanged up upon a tree,—Mess John he sung a psalm.

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[1] *Jacobite Lairds of Gask*, p. 385; Burt's *Letters*, i. 205.

[2] Ramsay, ii. 73; Somerville, p. 345.

[3] Dunbar's *Social Life*, p. 128; Chambers' *Popular Rhymes*, 3rd edit. p. 294.

[4] Hogg's *Jacobite Relics*, 1819, p. 209. Scott, in *Fasti Eccles. Scot.*, identifies the hero of the song with a minister in the north of Scotland.

Where was there such pleasant intercourse as in these Jacobite circles? There was full-bodied heartiness in their hates and a cheerfulness in their kinships; their absurd prejudices had a flavour of lovable quaintness. Their unshaken belief in the virtues and kingly graces of the Stuarts had a touching idolatry. There could not be seen a spot in the son, nor yet the grandson, of James; and ladies, who sang charming Jacobite songs, to still more charming airs, wrote Jacobite letters, in which they raved wildly and spelt lamentably. What fire fills the elderly bosom of Miss Christian Threipland[1] as she expresses her ardent enthusiasm!—"Oh, had you beheld my Hero, you must confess him a Gift from heaven. I never saw such vivacity, such piercing Wit, worn with a fine Judgement and an active Genius. . . . In short, madam, he is the Top of perfection and Heaven's darling." Woe to the heedless who unguardedly spoke of the Prince as Pretender! "*Pretender*, forsooth! and be dawm'd to ye!"[2] flared out Lady Strange, as she eyed with scorn a maligner, who began to wish he had never been born. Thus they swore by the Stuarts, as they swore at the Georges.

IV

Paid as the lairds were chiefly "in kind," there was little money at their disposal, and even after the grain rent had been sold in the market, it produced but little.[3] It is not surprising, therefore, that the gentry were miserably poor. The nobles and lairds were constantly at their wits' end to get means to pay their way, and were obliged to live sparingly. It was a tradition[4] that in the days of Scots Parliament at the beginning of the century, when the session closed, the

[1] R. Chambers' *Threiplands of Fingask*, p. 43.

[2] Dennistoun's *Life of Sir Robert Strange*, ii. 213.

[3] Lord Strathmore about 1690 inherited one of the largest estates in Scotland, which was valued at 560 chalders victual and 100 merks of rent.—*Book of the Records of Glamis*, Introd. p. 64.

[4] Burton's *Hist. of Scot.* 1689-1748, i. 421. The modesty of the incomes of the most eminent of professional society is evidenced by the fact that before the Union the Lord President had £500 a year, and the fifteen judges only £200, though five had £100 additional. After the Union the salaries were raised to £1000 and £500 respectively.

Canongate jail was crowded with peers, whom their creditors could seize the moment the period of immunity had ceased. When in difficulties it was hard to raise money by any expedient. There were no banks except in Edinburgh, and from these little aid could be got. Although some shopkeepers[1] offered to lend money on good security, the chief means of raising funds was through the country "writers," who found money which was lent on wadset—the land mortgaged becoming the possession of the lender if the debt was not paid by a certain date. Many a laird who had tried in vain to save money for "tochers" to his daughters was forced at their marriage to mortgage his property,[2] and lived with the load of wadset upon his mind and land. Hardly a laird or lord was free of debt, or had an estate unburdened. He could not borrow a few pounds without getting two or three neighbours to become security as "cautioners." There was many an interview in the taverns of Edinburgh or county towns, when business was transacted over ale or wine with the lawyer, discussing anxiously the ways of finding means.

There was little coin in circulation in the country; and in the scarcity bonds and bills were negotiable as substitutes. Cases were not infrequent of these bonds being bought by persons who disliked the issuer or liked his land, and forced him to part with his acres to meet his liabilities.[3] Too many of the landowners had those possessions which were traditionally ascribed to the Fifeshire lairds: "a pickle land, a mickle debt, a doocot and a lawsuit."[4] Coins in the first half of the

[1] In 1730 James Blair, merchant at the head of the Saltmarket, Glasgow, announces that at his shop "all persons who have occasion to buy and sell bills of exchange, or want money to borrow, or have money to lend on interest, or have sort of goods to sell, or want to buy any kind of goods," etc. "may deliver their commands."

[2] Burt's *Letters*, i. 240.—"The portion or tocher of a laird's eldest daughter is looked upon as a handsome one if it amounts to 1000 merks, which is £55 : 11 : 1½, and 10,000 merks, or £555 : 11 : 1, is generally esteemed no bad tocher for a daughter of the lower rank of quality."

[3] *Book of Records of Glamis*, Introduction.

[4] An unpublished letter of Jean Carnegy, Lady Kinfauns, to her factor shows the inconveniences of a victual rent. "Sir . . . I doo indeed think the pryces of the victuall are so low that it may very well be called a Drugg; but since it is universally soo, and there is noo hopes of its rysing it can't be helped, and considering the quantity I have to dispose of is but small, and that putting the

century were not sufficient for the currency needs of the country; gold was never seen; silver was exceedingly scarce, especially after all the Scots coinage had been called in subsequent to the Union. In default of Scots or English money, foreign coins were in ready use, and money which came from Holland, Spain, and France was welcome, though it was far from plentiful, because the imports much exceeded the exports. Leg-dollars, rix-dollars, guilders and ducatoons[1] were of service as home currency; but these became still scarcer, owing to their being drawn to England for the wars. The gentleman when he paid his physician paid him "five duccadoons," or a "jacobus," as substitute for a guinea. Although the Bank of Scotland, and after 1727 the Royal Bank, issued £1 notes, even that represented a sum which merchants and their customers found it highly inconvenient[2] to change, while the owner of a £10 note might ransack half a dozen county towns without finding a merchant with silver enough to cash it.[3] For any one travelling this dearth of coins was a serious difficulty; and as he could get no accommodation by banking accounts, he put his money in his saddle or carriage-bags, to last him till his return. A great nobleman like the Duke of Roxburgh, when living in London as Secretary for Scotland in 1720, used to have £100 monthly sent to him from home by waggon;[4] but modest members of Parliament were in sore straits when their frugal finances vanished in southern society like snow in sunshine. No wonder it was difficult to get the Scots members to attend to their duties at Westminster, and the piteous appeals to undergo the expense and trouble of travelling and staying in the south were sent in vain by the Secretary for Scotland. It was owing to this stress for money that gentlemen often paid their tradesmen, as they themselves

meall in girnill must be both troublesome and expensive, and that it would be very inconvenient for the Tennents to oblige them to keep their oats in their hands, I referr it to yourself to dispose of it to the best advantage you can. 25th Ffebruary 1725."

[1] *Account Book of Foulis of Ravelston.* The foreign monies in frequent use were leg-dollars = £2 : 16s. Scots, rix-dollars = £2 : 18s. Scots, guilders = £1 : 2 : Scots, ducatoons = £3 : 10s. Scots.

[2] *The £1 Note*, by W. Graham; Kerr's *Hist. of Scottish Banking.*

[3] *Letters of Two Centuries*, edited by Fraser Mackintosh, p. 213.

[4] Somerville's *Own Life*, p. 353.

were paid by their tenants, "in kind." The weaver, the blacksmith, and the joiner were allowed as part wages so many firlots of oats or of barley; and sometimes the pay of mechanics about the house was reckoned in so much grain a year.[1] The lack of metal currency was a chronic distress in Scotland, and caused incessant inconvenience long after the increase of rents and the growth of trade had relieved every class from poverty.

The great domestic problem in every age with parents is how to get their daughters "off" and how to get their sons "on." Especially perplexing was this question in the first half of the century, when there were extremely few openings for the sons of gentlemen, little trade, a meagre commerce, and few industries; when the army called forth little enthusiasm in the Scots to fight the battles of the English; when the colonies had not yet opened their avenues to fortune. Many a gentleman sent his eldest son after being at college to a lawyer's office to pick up some knowledge of law and business useful for his future estate. Unfortunately, he often acquired just enough legal lore to make him litigious all his days, to be ever alert to raise actions against aggressive neighbours, and in his rubicund age to rejoice in having many a "guid-ganging plea."[2] Legal processes were incessant, for legal precedents were not plentiful enough to give clear guidance—thereby adding to the glorious uncertainty of the law, and to the certainty of fortunes for lawyers. Younger

[1] *Arniston Memoirs*, p. 50. At Arniston, farm labourers, wright, smith, and even "bedall" figure in the factor's books for so many bolls of grain yearly. Even in 1780 the practice was not abandoned. At Cawdor House the gardener is paid 12 bolls, the shepherd 5 bolls, and the maltster 10 bolls of oats yearly as wages.—*Book of Thanes of Cawdor.*

[2] The law dealt out its decisions with imperturbable deliberation in those days. A process of spuilzie of 6 bolls of seed oats committed by Major Fraser continued before the Court of Session for twelve or thirteen years.—*Major Fraser's Manuscript*, ii. 101. Another case—spuilzie of horses from Laird of Thunderton in 1716—gained decree in favour of aggrieved party against Lord Lovat and his kinsman six years after; but the process still went on for fifty years, long after the litigants were dead. Law-pleas became heirlooms. Arch. Dunbar began proceedings against Lovat in 1722, and died in 1733, leaving his debts and his process to his daughters. In 1749 it was conveyed to Arch. Dunbar of Newton, three years after the chief debtor, Lord Lovat, was beheaded. The amount of original decree was £88; by 1749 it had risen to £249.—*Ibid.* i. 83-84.

sons had a small range of employments to choose from in the absence of commerce and colonial enterprise. The professions were open; but till near the middle of the century medicine was little taught in the country, and those who wished to learn this subject required to study it in the medical schools of Leyden, or Paris. The Church, of course, was a shut career to the Episcopalian by its polity, and an unattractive career to many a Presbyterian from its austerity and fanaticism. The law—especially the Bar—was the best profession for a gentleman's son who wished to live by his brains and associate with his equals. But even that was for the few. It was therefore in trade that younger sons of good family often sought a livelihood.[1] It was not considered below their dignity to become apprentices to shopkeepers, who under the vaguely comprehensive title of "merchant" might deal in anything from tallow-candles to brocade, from tobacco to Tay pearls. In small low-ceilinged rooms in a second or third flat in the Edinburgh High Street the best merchants had their shops. Silversmiths, clothiers, woollen drapers, were frequently men of good birth and social position. The brother of a proud land proprietor did not disdain to sell in his cramped, ill-lighted wareroom so many yards of shalloons or "Kilmarnocks"; for in those days a gentleman's son felt it as natural to fall into trade as for a rich tradesman to rise out of it. Country towns like Elgin or Inverness had their "merchants," *alias* shopkeepers, who were often connected with the best families in the country, who

[1] Many curious illustrations of this union of trade with high lineage and good family can be given. Among the silk mercers in Edinburgh were "John Hope and Co."—Hope being younger son of Hope of Rankeillor, the partners, Stewart and Lindsay, sons of landed proprietors; among the drapers was the firm of "Lindsay and Douglas"—the former younger son of Lindsay of Eaglescairney, the latter of Douglas of Garvaldfoot; and the firm of "Douglas and Inglis"—the one being son of Douglas of Fingask, the other was younger son of Sir John Inglis of Cramond, and succeeded to the baronetcy. Another firm which dealt in cloth in a small warehouse in a flat was "Hamilton and Dalrymple," the latter being younger brother of Lord Hailes. The leading partner of Stewart, Wallace and Stoddart, was Stewart of Dunearn.—Chambers' *Edinburgh Merchants of Old Times*. In 1678 the son of Sir Ludovic Gordon, the premier baronet of Scotland, finished his apprenticeship to R. Blackwood, merchant, burgess of Edinburgh, learning "his airt and trade of merchandizing."—Dunbar's *Social Life*, p. 140. Kerr of Boughtrigg, jeweller, and afterwards M.P., married the daughter of Lord Charles Kerr.—Kay's *Edinburgh Portraits*, i. 104.

sold linen and wine, lent money, and, perhaps, finally bought an estate. The lady reduced in fortune who, in Inverness, followed the business of milliner and dressmaker, to pay off her father's debts, was not less respected and visited by my Lady Lovat because she made and charged for stays and stomachers.[1] It was thought quite natural that, though Balgarran had been three hundred years in the family, the Lady Balgarran should advertise that "she and her daughters, having attained to great perfection in making and twisting sewing thread which is cheap and white," sold it at "from fivepence to six shillings an ounce."[2] It was not rare for lads of good degree in those impecunious times even to become "hecklers" or flax-dressers, to serve apprenticeship to joiners and ship-carpenters.[3] The fact that the sons of men of good family often followed the calling of village tradesmen is the clearest proof of the poverty in which gentry were often sunk. Hessian officers stationed in the Highlands after the Rebellion of '45 were astonished to find innkeepers able to converse with them in Latin, these doubtless being men of good birth who were obliged to follow any occupation—even in a wretched mountain hostelry—which would give them a livelihood. Even noblemen were occasionally reduced to the sorest straits of poverty, when their lands were burdened with debts and wadsets.

[1] *Letters of Two Centuries*, p. 244.

[2] Chambers' *Domestic Annals*, iii. 510.

[3] Cases of the reduction of men of good birth to lowly occupations are far from uncommon. Wemyss, Governor of Edinburgh Castle, son of Wemyss of Wemyss Hall, began life as a "heckler" or flax-dresser. Sir Michael Malcolm, who married the daughter of Lord Bathurst, had been trained as a joiner in London.—Chambers' *Traditions of Edinburgh*, ii. pp. 33, 47. In 1710 Mr. Dunbar at Inverness writes to his cousin Dunbar of Thunderton a letter of introduction for and by William Macleod, "a joiner to his employment, that lived in this place a year following his trade, has served his apprenticeship in Edinburgh, and thrie yeares a journeyman in London; he is brother of Donald Macleod of Geanies, and coosin german of Catbolls [these being two of the principal families of the Macleod clan], and as I understand is in tearms of marriadge with our coosin Christian Dumbreck and goes yr lenth of purpose to ask your consent and countenance."—Dunbar's *Social Life*, p. 143. In 1732 Lord Strathnaver writes to the master builder at Sheerness recommending the son of a brother officer, Major Dunbar: "The young man has choysed the employment of a ship-carpenter, let me know on what terms you accept the young gentleman."—*Ibid.* 2nd series, p. 126. See *Bishop Forbes' Diary and Church of Moray*, p. 244; Burton's *Life of David Hume*, i. 197; Dennistoun's *Life of Sir R. Strange*, i. 70.

One other reason, however, may be given for the fact that sons of gentlemen of position held humble places in life. That was the scruple which staunch Jacobites entertained at entering any occupation which required them to take the oath of allegiance to the Hanoverian king. This objection closed to these very conscientious persons the Bar (although it was regarded as sorely tainted with Jacobitism), and it closed against them also the army and every government post. In their necessity not a few became shopkeepers or tenants of small farms on the estates of elder brothers, or other branches of the family, where they lived humbly in a mean thatched farmhouse, and tilled a poor hundred acres, though they were members of the best families in the land.[1]

The Highland gentleman when reduced to poverty, or in difficulty of finding occupation, rarely bemeaned himself so far as to become a manufacturer or shopkeeper. He would take a farm, become a small tacksman or wadsetter of a chief, or keep an inn. A gentleman of Highland blood scorned to handle an ell-wand; but he would fill an ale-stoup, and many a remote hostelry in the north was kept by a cadet of good family, who was versed in manners and scholarship, and surprised southern customers by his pride and his Latinity.[2] Yet one more occupation was deemed not unworthy of the dignity of Highland gentry; for at Crieff Trysts, where the droves of black cattle were brought from far-off glen and strath to be bought by English graziers, there were to be seen, selling their oxen, gentlemen of long pedigree, "mightily civil-dressed in their slashed waistcoats, trousings and blue bonnets, with their poniards and broadswords, all speaking Irish."[3] When taunted by his brother, Lord Seafield, with carrying on such

[1] Gleig's *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, p. vii.; Tytler's *Life of Lord Kames*, vol. i.

[2] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1754.—"It is not uncommon to see a lord dismount from his horse, and taking one of these gentlemen in his arms make him as many compliments as if he were his brother peer, and the reason is that the ale-house keeper is of as good family as any in Scotland, and perhaps taken his degree of master of arts in a university." Ramsay's *Scotland and Scotsmen*, ii. 518, note; Stewart's *Sketches of Highlands*, 1822, ii. p. xxx. Major Fraser, who was henchman and friend of Lord Lovat, was obliged to keep an inn in Inverness. —*Major Fraser's Manuscript*, edit. by Fergusson, ii. 119; Burt's *Letters*, i. 66.

[3] *Journey through Scotland*, 1729, p. 194.

an ignoble trade, Patrick Ogilvie, in allusion to the share and profit his lordship had in the Union, replied, "My lord, it is better to sell nowt than nations."

V

Bearing in mind the deep impecuniosity of this period, the homely habits and frugal ways of the gentlefolk, we cannot be surprised that the fine arts met with little encouragement. The architecture outside the houses was of the plainest, and they wished no better; while decoration within seemed a sad waste of money, and they had none to squander. On the room walls were hanging stiff wooden portraits of the heads of the family, with no particular expression, and with particularly poor skill. That Art may grow it is necessary that there should be taste; that an artist may live it is necessary that there be patrons; but in order that there be patrons it is further necessary that there should be money. Unfortunately, Scotland lacked all these requisites—money, taste, and patrons. Since that one true Scots artist, George Jamesone of Aberdeen, died in 1644, there was hardly one existing north of the Tweed; and the "Scottish Vandyke," trained in the studio of Rubens, had been content to execute brilliant portraits of his noble employers at the modest rate of "twenty-three shillings sterling, colour and claith included"; or if he supplied the frame or "muller," at the charge of "thirty-four shillings sterling," which made the value of the artist's work only twice the cost of the carpenter's frame. What more vivid evidence of the artistic destitution of the country could be found than in the long gallery at Holyrood, with its rows of well-varnished effigies of crowned heads of Scotland, beginning with Fergus I., 350 B.C., all presenting a suspicious similarity of nasal feature as striking as the hereditary "Austrian lip" of the House of Hapsburg? For such a national work no native artist could be found, and in 1684 the Duke of York engaged the Dutchman Jacob de Witt for the not extravagant sum of £250 to paint a hundred and fifty royal effigies within two years, which was duly accomplished with a skill proportionate to the price of the job.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century one artist

was enough to satisfy the artistic cravings of the country, and even he was a foreigner. Induced by the promise of customers to venture from London, the Spaniard, Juan Bautista Medina, had come to the unknown north, bringing with him in a smack to Leith an ample supply of canvasses containing "bodies and postures," male and female, ready painted, to which the heads of his future clients were to be affixed. For twenty years this "Kneller of the north," Sir John Medina—for he had been knighted by the Duke of Queensberry before the Union of 1707—was engaged, till his death in 1710, making likenesses of all who cared or could afford to have them painted: now busy in his ill-lighted room in an Edinburgh flat, immortalising the features of the nobility and gentry, and of the merchants, with their wives; now travelling painfully along the deplorable bridle-paths to almost inaccessible country mansions, with his man behind him in charge of canvasses and colours and frames. The knight was ready—for he was a capable artist, as his works prove—to copy skilfully the visages of the living, or to limn imaginary likenesses of defunct ancestors to please the family vanity, and cover the walls of his customers, adding the required countenances to the already painted human trunks which he had in stock, at £10 a piece, or £3 for a copy. He was willing to accommodate his subjects with Roman armour, or laced high ruffs and farthingales, or contemporary perukes and embroidered coats, to suit their taste and their period. There was no demand for any other sort of picture. Classic themes no laird would look at; mythological subjects none could understand; besides, propriety would be shocked with anything nude, and orthodoxy horrified at anything pagan. Portraits, and portraits alone, of the dead or living could attract a customer. Jacobites, too, across the water and at home, were anxious to have portraits of Mary Queen of Scots, and by their commissions kept some poor men busy. From the brush of John Medina, the shiftless son of the knight, in lucid intervals of sobriety, and from Alexander, the descendant of the illustrious Jamesone, came, besides likenesses of nobles and gentlemen, many representations of Queen Mary,[1] which descendants

[1] Burton's *Life of Hume*. i. 234.

of the purchasers came in time to treasure in the vain imagination that they were veritable original copies from life of the unfortunate monarch, whose head was executed as ruthlessly on canvas as she herself had been executed at Fotheringay.

But all this work so poorly paid could not keep more than two or three men with average appetites, and whenever a man discovered any talent in himself, he fled the impoverished country to cities where money was less scarce and people were more liberal. There was only one when Sir John Medina died. William Aikman had been at his easel since 1712, in his High Street close, a laird by rank, a good painter by craft, a clubbable man, and a man of fashion and pleasantry, as one sees in his portrait, with affable well-bred visage under his flowing Wycherley wig. To his door not a few customers came up the steep scale staircase, and his hand was engaged depicting features of lords and lairds and ladies, with their silks and satins, Flanders lace, periwigs and powder, whose portraits are to-day cherished ancestral heirlooms in many an old mansion. But ten years were enough to weary Aikman of a poor business and customers that grudged to be immortalised at £10 for a painted yard of canvas, "forbye a frame"; and he quitted Edinburgh amid valedictory regrets, suppers, and poetical epistles from Allan Ramsay and others, and went to London to get society and fortune, to rival the great Sir Godfrey Kneller, till in 1731 he died, and was interred in Greyfriars' Churchyard—for Scotland was good enough to be buried in but not good enough to live in. Behind him in Edinburgh he had left two or three practitioners whose names are shadows to-day, most of whose works, after hanging on dining-room walls, retreated to bedrooms, from bedrooms to garrets, and finally, at "displenishing sales" of country seats, found themselves in retired and dusty nooks of old picture shops.[1]

Such was the condition of art in the first half of the century. Landscapes had no interest in an age which had

[1] Rose of Kilravock furnishes his portrait-gallery cheaply in 1727: "Cash paid to Mr. Watt for Lady Kilraick's picture, £1:10s."—*Roses of Kilravock*, p. 404.

no eye for the picturesque, planted no trees, and admired no scenery. For that branch of the business there was no demand whatever, unless for "house decoration," which was a fashion then affected by persons of quality. "Landskips with figures" were inserted at that period in the panels of doors, on wainscots and window-shutters, by house painters; and near Allan Ramsay's shop in the High Street in a flat lived "old Norrie," whose skill and trade were so considerable in ornamenting town residences of the richer classes with these panel designs that he has been called the first of the Scots landscape school of painting. While, owing to the parsimonious treatment of art, there were few native painters at work, gentlemen employed occasionally travelling foreigners, who came north, executed a few portraits, and then gladly returned to their more genial climates.[1]

VI

Nothing tended to preserve intact the traditional ways and the provincial and stay-at-home habits of the gentry so much as the difficulty of leaving home, and the wretched roads that hindered communication with towns, and therefore kept them from having intercourse with the world. The highways were tracks of mire in wet weather and marshes in winter, till the frost had made them sheets of ice, covered with drifted snow; when rain fell the flat ground became lakes with islands of stone, and the declivities became cataracts. Even towns were often connected only by pack-roads, on which horses stumbled perilously along, and carriages could not pass at all,[2] over unenclosed land and moorland, where, after rain, it was difficult to trace any beaten track. When snow set in, each country house was blockaded; there was nothing

[1] Brydall's *Hist. of Art in Scotland;* Stirling-Maxwell's *Annals of Artists in Spain*, vol. iii.; Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting*, 1862, vol. ii.; Wilson's *Memorials of Edinburgh;* Cunningham's *British Painters.*

[2] When early in the century Hugh, Earl of London, was conveyed as a child to Edinburgh, he was put in a pannier slung across the back of a horse, accompanied by a servant riding on another horse. His journey occupied the most of a week.—Tytler and Watson's *Songstresses of Scot.* i. 286.

to look on but the bleak, white, treeless waste. Then it was that the isolated household appreciated the advantage of having within doors the great store of salted meat, the girnals full of grain to make their "groats" and "knockit bear," their brew-house to supply the ale. When communication was so hard, and roads were miserable, coaches were of little service, and were the luxury only of the few who were rich. In 1720 there were no chariots or chaises to be found north of the Tay; and when the first chaise was seen in 1725 in Inverness drawn by its six horses, the excitement created was immense. As it rumbled along the Highlanders rushed from their huts, and unbonneted with abject reverence before the coachman, whom they took for the principal personage on the equipage.[1]

In spite of Marshal Wade's great work in making 260 miles of roads, in many districts it was still a dangerous expedition if the mist fell in the North—when the postilion went by tracks he could not see, in a region he did not know, in search of a wright or smith he could not find, to mend a vehicle shaken to pieces by ruts, and with axle-tree broken by boulders.

Such a disastrous journey Simon, Lord Lovat, vividly describes in 1740, having set forth with his two daughters from Inverness to Edinburgh. Before starting, two or three days had been spent in repairing his carriage, and for precaution he brought his wheelwright as far as Aviemore, when he was assured that the chariot was safe enough to carry to London. "But I was not eight miles from the place when on the plain road the axle-tree of the hind wheels broke in two, so that my two girls were forced to go on bare horses behind the footmen, and I was obliged to ride myself though I was very tender. I came with that equipage to Ruthven late at night, and my chariot was pulled there by force of men, where I got an English wheelwright and a smith, who wrought two days mending my chariot . . . and I was not gone four miles from Ruthven when it broke again, so that I was in a miserable condition till I came to Dalnakeardach." Again it was mended, and he got to Castle Drummond, where he was storm-stayed

[1] *Spalding Miscellany*, i. 100; Burt's *Letters*, i. 7.

"by the most tempestuous weather of wind and rain I ever remember." Setting forth, "I was not three miles gone from Castle Drummond when the axle-tree of my fore wheels broke in two in the midst of the hill betwixt Drummond and the bridge of Erdoch, and we were forced to sit in the hill with a boisterous day till Chamberlain Drummond was so kind as to go down the strath and bring wrights, carts, and smiths to our assistance, who dragged us to the plain, where we were forced to stay five or six hours till there was a new axle-tree made, so that it was dark night before we came to Dumblain, which is but eight miles from Castle Drummond, all much fatigued."[1] At last they reach Edinburgh in safety, having taken eleven days for the journey. Such misadventures were apt to occur when chariots were rattled to bits on the execrable roads. Even when travelling on horseback the laird of Thunderton took five or six days to come from Morayshire to Edinburgh, about 150 miles;[2] and travelling on horseback was the only way on which journeys could in many frequented districts be made. If, however, a lady was old or delicate she might be conveyed in a sedan-chair, three porters being employed, one to take the place of the porter who was first exhausted.[3] Slowly and infrequently coaches passed along the most used thoroughfare. To perform the journey of sixteen miles between Edinburgh and Haddington[4] at the middle of the century occupied a whole winter's day for a coach with four horses. Not till 1749 did a stage-coach begin to run between Edinburgh and Glasgow.[5] Twice a week it started, each passenger paying 9s. 6d. and allowed one stone of luggage, and it took twelve hours to accomplish the journey of forty-six miles; nor was this speed exceeded till thirty years later. But even this was an enormous improvement in rapidity and comfort on previous days, when a coach spent a day and a half on the road. The state of the highways made the transit of carts well-nigh impossible in most parts of the year;

[1] *Spalding Miscellany*, i. 5.
[2] Dunbar's *Social Life*, i. 35.
[3] Chambers' *Threiplands of Fingask*, p. 36.
[4] Robertson's *Rural Recollections*.
[5] *Scots Magazine*, 1749, p. 253; *Glasgow Past and Present*, ii. 436. In 1749 a caravan was started to go between Edinburgh and Glasgow, going and returning twice a week, each person to pay 5s. fare.—*Scots Magazine*, 1749, p. 459.

and it was not till the middle of the century that carriers began to ply regularly from town to town with their wares and their parcels. Before then many tracts of the lowlands, with big villages and considerable populations, were almost without intercommunication, save by the cadgers, who sat on horseback with creels on each side carrying goods and letters. Even about 1770 the carrier took a fortnight to go to and from Selkirk and Edinburgh, conveying a load six hundredweight at a time, and this journey he could never accomplish in winter, and in the dry weather he drove along the channels of the Gala water, as being more traversable than the main road.[1]

As for travelling to far-off London, the obstacles were too great for poor persons, too perilous for nervous persons, to undertake the expedition. It was expensive, it was tedious, it was adventurous. To relieve the weariness of the long journey, Sir Richard Steele when he came to Scotland brought his French master to teach him the language of Paris on the way; and that it was a costly as well as a weary process is proved by the fact that this luxurious knight and his brother commissioners (of inquiry on forfeited estates) in 1717 were allowed £50 each for travelling expenses to Edinburgh—each clerk having the more modest allowance of £12.[2] In fact, to travel that road, spending fourteen days on the way, in a "closs bodyed carriage and sex horses," cost two gentlemen in 1725 the sum of "thretty pounds stirling."[3] Not unattended with danger, preparations for defence against English highwaymen were necessary. Mrs. Calderwood of Polton records how in 1756 she set off for the metropolis in her own

[1] Robertson's *Rural Recollections*, p. 40.

[2] Aitken's *Life of Steele*, ii. 151; Murray's *New York Buildings Company*, p. 36.

[3] Here is a contract for travelling in 1725: "London, May 15. Received from Col. W. Grant and Patrick Duff, Esq., sex guinies of earnest for a good closs bodyed coach and sex horses to sett out for Edinburgh from London on Monday 17th May, to travel sex dayes to York to rest their two dayes and travel two dayes and a half to Newcastle, and three or four days from that to Edinburgh as the roads will allow, and to make for the said coach thretty pounds stirling. The half to hand, and the other in Edinburgh, and the earnest to be forfeited if the gentlemen do not keep punctuality (signed Thos. Green)."—*Scottish Antiquary*, ii. 182.

post-chaise, attended by her faithful man-servant on horseback, who had pistols in his holsters, and a stout broadsword by his side. The lady had provided herself with a case of pistols to use if attacked on the lonely moorland roads.[1] Persons who needed to hire a chaise had the utmost difficulty in procuring a conveyance, even if they could afford it. Occasional chances occurred of getting from Edinburgh to London by return coaches drawn by six horses, which were duly advertised as ready to receive passengers.[2] Even in 1758 there were no four-wheeled chaises to be got for hire till arriving at Durham, for these conveyances were still in their infancy, and the two-wheeled carriages called "the Italian," lacerating to the frame, had been given up as instruments of torture.[3]

Scots members of Parliament could not usually afford to drive to Westminster, for the cost would have hopelessly burdened their sorely wadsetted lands; they therefore rode their own horses. Even John Duke of Argyll is said to have strapped the skirts of his coat round his waist and dashed on horseback through the worst storms of winter on his southward way. "Jupiter" Carlyle describes how he and other ministers convoyed as far as Wooler John Home, setting off with the play of *Douglas* in one of his borrowed leather saddle-bags, and a "clean shirt and night-cap" in the other, on a snowy morning of February 1755.[4] With the costliness of travelling to face, many Scotsmen who had no money to waste found it the best plan to buy cheaply a horse to ride and then to sell it—at a profit if they could—on reaching their destination. It was in this manner that William Murray (afterwards Lord Mansfield) started forth in 1717, at the age of sixteen, on his eventful journey to London, on his little horse, with the paternal instructions of Lord

[1] Mrs. Calderwood's *Letters and Journals.*

[2] Chambers' *Domestic Annals*, iii. 408.

[3] Carlyle's *Autobiography*, p. 331; Wright's *Life of General Wolfe*, p. 263. "I must tell you that I was beat to pieces in the new post-chaises or machines that are purposely constructed to torture the unhappy creatures that are placed in them. I was forced at last to have recourse to post-horses." So in 1747 Major Wolfe describes his experiences of travelling between Scotland and England.

[4] Carlyle's *Autobiography;* Omond's *Lord Advocates of Scotland*, i. 327.

Stormont to sell his pony on his arrival to pay his expenses.[1] Dr. Skene of Aberdeen in 1753 bought a mare for eight guineas, and after he had been eighteen days on the road (his expenses amounting to four guineas) he disposed of his animal for the price he had paid for it.[2] When even these means were beyond the reach of the poor traveller's purse he might journey, as Tobias Smollett did in 1739, partly by waggon, partly on the pack-horses he overtook on the road, and the rest of the way on foot.[3] Till Grantham was reached, 110 miles from London, one found no turnpike road, coach and horse going by a narrow causeway, with soft unmade earth on either side, and constantly forced to stop to allow the long strings of thirty or forty pack-horses that blocked the way to squeeze by, as they carried their merchandise to the towns.[4] But for those who could afford it, there was the one stage-coach which up to 1754 started from the Grassmarket once a month, making in twelve or sixteen days the passage to London, which was accompanied by such perils, real or imaginary, that timid passengers made their wills before setting forth.[5] At that time, however, a private chaise sometimes would traverse the route at the rapid rate of only six days.

In consequence of the small number of passengers on the roads in those days of bad travelling, the inns in Scotland were miserable in the extreme. In country towns they were mean hovels, with dirty rooms, dirty food, and dirty attendants.[6] The Englishman, as he saw the servants without shoes or stockings, as he looked at the greasy tables without a cover, and saw the butter thick with cow-hairs, the coarse meal served without a knife and fork, so that he had to use his fingers or a clasp-knife, the one glass or tin can handed

[1] Campbell's *Lives of the Chief-Justices*, 1874, iii. 170.

[2] Smiles' *Lives of the Engineers*, iii. 25.

[3] Smollett's *Roderick Random*, chap. viii.

[4] *New Stat. Acct. Scotland* (Lanark), p. 206.

[5] Creech's *Fugitive Pieces*, p. 63. There appeared the following advertisement in *Edinburgh Courant*, July 1, 1754: "The Edinburgh stage-coach for the better accommodation of passengers will be altered to a neat genteel two-end glass machine hung on steel springs, exceeding light and easy to go in 10 days in summer and 12 in winter on every alternate Tuesday."—Grant's *Old and New Edinburgh*, ii. 15.

[6] Burt's *Letters*, i. 13; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1766.

round the company from mouth to mouth, his gorge rose. The contrast with the English hostelries was terrible—there everything was charming for its cleanliness, comfort, cosiness, and cooking. It was the wearied traveller's haven of rest after long dusty stages, associated with ease and civility, good drink, good fare, good beds, and good company, beside the genial parlour fire. But in Scotland the hostelries even in large towns afforded more entertainment for beast than for man. They were more fit for stabling than for lodging.[1] Even when Captain Topham arrived in Edinburgh in 1776, and was recommended to one of the best inns in the city, he was driven out of it by the dirt and discomfort, by the rooms filled with carters and drovers, the filthy bedrooms, the smells and sights, and he sought refuge in a lodging in a fourth or fifth flat, slightly less unpleasant, and a vast deal dearer. It would therefore seem that the condition of these houses had little improved since the beginning of the century. With eloquent emotion Dr. Johnson was wont to speak of the delightful comforts of an English tavern; it is not in similar strains he could speak of Scottish inns. Fortunately for him, when in 1773 the lexicographer came north, he was ensconced, till Boswell took him to James's Court, in the "White Horse" in Edinburgh, which, with all its discomforts, was fairly clean, and in "Saracen's Head" in Glasgow, which, when built twenty years before, was the very first inn in the west that ever gave decent accommodation.[2] The redeeming feature of these places was their cheapness—the tavern ordinary was only 4d., and the claret —the only thing Englishmen could praise—was good and cheap, costing only 1s. a mutchkin in the early years of the century.[3]

[1] *Journey to North of England and Scotland in* 1704, privately printed 1818; Burt's *Letters*, i. 13, 143; Macky's *Journey through Scotland*, 1729; *Humphrey Clinker; Gentleman's Mag.* May 1766; *Letters from Edinburgh*, 1776. The hostelries in Edinburgh were meant rather for putting up horses than the travellers, who were expected to seek lodgings elsewhere. In St. Mary's Wynd an inn had stabling for 100 horses, and a shed for 20 carriages.

[2] Strang's *Clubs of Glasgow*, p. 131.

[3] Foulis of Ravelston enters in his Accompt Books: "To dinner with the President and oyr [other] lords of Session £1 : 7s. Scots" (p. 351). Tavern Bill of Dunbar of Thunderton in 1700: "Item for 20 dayes dyet to yourself and servant £07.08.00."—Dunbar's *Social Life*, p. 39. Carlyle pays 3s. 6d. for four days' board and lodging at an inn.—Carlyle's *Autobiography*, p. 98.

Communication by letter in the first half of the century was as slow and uncertain as by person, and correspondence was rare between town and country people. The marvels of cacography in the old epistles amply testify that their writers wrote with difficulty and spelt by chance.[1] After the Union of 1707 the post was reformed in Scotland. The whole establishment cost only £1000 yearly; the general post-master stationed in Edinburgh having a salary of £200, and, employing an accountant and two clerks, he managed easily the entire postal business. For several years one letter-carrier was found sufficient to distribute all the letters in Edinburgh, though in later years the staff was increased to three. As the closes were labyrinthine, the flats high, the houses un-numbered, the addresses of the vaguest, it is evident that the correspondence for a population of 30,000 must have been extremely limited.[2] The London mail-bag in the early part of the century was sometimes found to contain only one letter, and this even occurred once so late as 1746. Six days were spent by post-boys on the road to London,[3] when they carried their small consignment in a portmanteau behind them, and it sometimes occurred that in crossing a river the post-boy, horse, and bags disappeared and were never seen again; and in the confusion of an inn refreshment, it happened that the letters were returned.[4] All letters were at first conveyed

[1] Joyce's *Hist. of Post Office;* Lang's *Hist. of Post Office in Scotland.* "I was informed 60 years ago (*i.e.* 1760) by officials who had been employed in the post-office that Provost Alexander, the only banker at the beginning of the century, had often received a solitary letter by the London mail."—Somerville's *Own Life*, p. 536. Chambers' *Minor Antiquities of Edin.* p. 204.

[2] Specimens of addresses of letters in 1702: "ffor Mr. Arch. Dumbar of Thunderstown to be left at Captain Dumbar's writing chamber at the Iron Revell third storie below the cross north end of the closs at Edinburgh"; "ffor Captain Phillip Anstruther of New Grange atte his lodgeing a litle above the fountain well south side of the street Edenbourgh."—Dunbar's *Social Life*, p. 34. In 1781 there were six letter-carriers in Edinburgh.—Lang's *Hist.*

[3] Strange to say, the post established in 1635 took half the time performing the journey between London and Edinburgh, doing it in three days.—Arnot's *Hist. of Edin.* p. 537. In 1790 letters conveyed between these two cities in four days.—*Ibid.* p. 536.

[4] In 1725 and in 1733, 1734, the post-boy was drowned or fell off his horse in the river; in 1720, 1728, the mail-bag was returned with same letters.—Chambers' *Annals*, iii. 513.

to towns by foot-runners—who never ran—carrying them as far as Thurso and Inverness. They set out twice a week to Glasgow, leaving on Tuesday and Thursday at twelve o'clock at night and arriving on the evening of the next day; but by 1717 there was begun a horse-post, which left at eight at night and arrived at six next morning—its appearance in Trongate being announced to the citizens by the firing of a gun. Some years later, to the more distant towns, post-boys went on horseback instead of on foot as of old. Thrice a week they set forth on their sorry nags to the largest towns, and twice a week to the smaller, while those letter-carriers who still went on foot went only once a week to their several places. Slowly the post-boys ambled on, stopping two nights on the road from Edinburgh to Aberdeen, pausing leisurely to refresh themselves and rest their horses; for it was not till 1750 that bags were carried on from stage to stage by different postmen and by fresh relays of horses to the far-out offices. There were only thirty-four post-towns for some time in all Scotland,[1] and the difficulty was for people to know how to get letters or to learn that there were letters to get. The postman dared not deliver them to any person on the way, but must carry them to the terminal post-office, where they might remain uncalled for in dust and obscurity till chance discovered their existence to their owners. Cadgers and carriers could bring them more easily and more safely, and often did so, though in violation of the law, which forbade under penalty any such infringement of the monopoly of the State. When this slow and unsure transmission of news prevailed it was inevitable that tidings of public events penetrated fitfully to remoter districts.[2] Ministers supplicated for the king's long life weeks after his lamented Majesty had

[1] For some years after 1707. The postmasters of Haddington and Cockburnspath had a salary of £50, being on the main line to England, while those of Glasgow and Aberdeen had £25 each, those of Dundee, Montrose, and Inverness £15, and those of Ayr and Dumfries only £12.—Joyce's *Hist. of Post Office.* In 1781 there were 140 post-offices, and in 1791, 164.—Lang's *Hist. of Post Office in Scotland.* Revenue of Post-Office in Scotland in 1707 was £1194; in 1754, £8927; in 1776, £31,000.—Arnot's *Hist.* p. 541.

[2] Before 1756 there was no post-office in the Hebrides, and not one in all the West Highlands beyond the Chain.—Walker's *Econ. Hist. of Hebrides,* ii. 336.

been buried; and in the long specific prayers "many a time," it was said by a long-sufferer, "I thanked God for giving us a glorious victory when we had been shamefully beaten, for inspiring courage in the troops when they had run away; for success granted to our arms in battles that were never fought, for deliverance from plots that were never formed." Few would have the charming frankness of the Highland minister of Alness, who, finding that his information had been erroneous, said from the pulpit, "My brethren, it was a' lees I tell't ye last Sabbath."[1]

Owing to the infrequency of travelling, there was at least one class of criminals from which Scotland was exempt, and that was of highwaymen. That fraternity, so large and prosperous beyond the border, was here unknown; they would have grown weary of waiting for passengers to waylay, and died of poverty from finding so little to plunder from their persons.

VII

Amid the resources of civilisation, one of the least trustworthy, though the most self-confident, was that of medicine. The gross empiricism of its practitioners, the lack of scientific knowledge, the use of preposterous methods, the ignorance of all rational remedies, was as marked as in the middle ages.[2] The sciences of physic and surgery were in their infancy, and till 1726 in Edinburgh and 1740 in Glasgow there was

[1] *Letters from a Blacksmith*, etc., 1754; *Memoirs of a Highland Lady* (Miss Grant of Rothiemurchus), p. 192.

[2] The fees were not exorbitant. Charges of Kenneth Mackenzie, "Chyr Aporie" in Elgin, 1719-20, to the laird of Thunderton: "Cephalick powder, 2s. Scots; 2 oz. centaury, 4s.; vomitory, 10s.; ane pott of ane elecuary, 14s.; gargarism, £1 : 16s."—Dunbar's *Social Life*, i. 21. Fees charged in 1721 by a practitioner of chyme and medicine against patients who refused to pay: "1, to J. W., six pounds Scots as being for severall tymes letting blood of his wyffe and giving phisick to her, and my paines in going 3 severall tymes to his house being 4 miles distant frae myne. 2, W. N., a guinie as being a moderate and reasonable satisfaction for my paines and expenses in making up plaisters and other medicaments to performing a cure upon his nose when the same was cut off by J. Bartholemew as alledged—deducting 2 shills. sterg. paid. 3, J. H., eleven pounds Scots as being for my paines in being severall tymes to his house using drugs and severall medicaments to him when he was under a consumption and wherof I cured him."—Hector's *Judicial Records*, p. 102.

no University school or qualified professor. Those men only could get any insight into their profession who went abroad to study at Leyden under Boerhaave or in Paris. Others learned their art in the sickroom of the patient, or in the shops of chirurgeons. But as a rule the art of healing was in the hands of the chirurgeon-apothecaries, who had learned the little they knew when serving their apprenticeship to uneducated country surgeons, who acted as general practitioners, and whose drugs they had made up in the closets where they wielded the pestle. It is true that their fees were small, and it once was usual for a doctor to get the gift of a hat or "propynes" of malt or meal for services; yet there was ample need for all the skill and knowledge of the profession in those days, when sanitation was unknown, when the mansions of the greatest were without the most rudimentary and essential conveniences of cleanliness, when there were epidemics which passed with fatal virulence over the population, when ague arose yearly from the marshy soil, disabling its thousands, when small-pox ravaged the community, and fevers came through filth. Ladies were troubled with the "vapours," and it must be owned that neither ladies nor gentlemen were free from the trouble of the itch.[1] When sickness broke out the chirurgeon-apothecary was sent for, and came with his lancets, boluses, confections, and electuaries in his saddle-bags, and the big sand-glass in his capacious skirt pocket to count the patient's pulse.[2]

The inevitable panacea for almost every disease, according to the practice of the age, was, of course, "blood-letting"; and in those days there was more bloodshed in peace than in time of war. Even in perfect health a gentleman thought that he could not preserve his constitution unless at certain seasons of the year he was "let blood." There is no more frequent charge in medical bills than for phlebotomising, and there is one item which seems mysterious in old household account-books—"to drink money to the surgeon's man to take away the pellets," the "pellets" being the little leaden

[1] "To Miss Helen Crosbie, cure for vapours and itch, £6 : 6s."; "The Sheriff of Moray for itch, £6 : 9s. Scots," are items in a doctor's bills at the end of the preceding century.—*Scot. Society of Antiquaries*, iv. 181. Other items are for "scrofulous chouks" (cheeks), "liviters," and "cockhecticks."

[2] Chambers' *Traditions*, i. 105.

compasses used for two or three days to prevent undue bleeding. Had a child the "kink-hoast" (whooping-cough)? Then five leeches must be put behind the ear. Had he the headache? Then ten or twelve leeches must be placed round the temple. Cures for the various diseases were not far to seek—spiders, frogs, worms, and "slaters," or wood-lice, were to be got in the shrubbery;[1] physic herbs, such as Solomon's seal, agrimony, rosemary, and pennyroyal, were growing in the garden; and from these were made at once confections, electuaries, and vomitories.[2] For jaundice as an admirable cure was prescribed burnt earthworms in a decoction of wormwood, while consumption was counteracted by "colewort well boiled and often eaten," or "by snails boiled in cow's milk." A case of convulsions was treated with an application of sheep's lungs, or by young pigeons, whelps, or chickens "slit in the middle." If the doctor found his patient in an attack of palsy, he would anoint the part affected with a "preparation of camomile, white lilies, an hyperion of bour-tree and rue, earthworms and goose grease." "The person suffering from pleurisy must take a ball of horse's dung, well dried, beat into powder, drink it, and he will be cured"—so said Dr. Clark, the most fashionable physician in Edinburgh, whose fee was a guinea in days when guineas were extremely scarce.[3] The same eminent doctor—a skilful practitioner and a fine classical scholar to boot—gave a well-paid direction to Sir Robert Gordon in 1739 to cure his son: "Give him twice a day the juice of twenty slatters squeezed through a muslin bag." These "slaters," alias millepeds, alias wood-lice, were in constant

[1] Bufo, or toad, was used inwardly for dropsy and outwardly for carbuncles; slaters, otherwise wood-lice, or church bugs, were commended for colic, convulsions, and cancer, for palsy, headaches, and epilepsy; earthworms—"to preserve them the longest and fattest ought to be slit up, well washed, and then dried"—used for spasms, jaundice, or gout; vipers prescribed for dysentery, ague, and small-pox; excreta of sheep, horse, sow, and dog made up in decoctions and drunk for various ailments.—*Lectures on Materia Medica*, from MS. of Dr. Chas. Alston, Professor of Botany, Edinburgh, 2 vols. 1776.

[2] In 1712 there is an account of "the laird of Kilriack [Kilravock] yr., debtor to A. Paterson, chyr-apothecaire at Inverness, for tussilago flower, maiden-hair, mousear, horse-tail, St. John's wort, pennyroyal, althea root, white lily root, fenugreek seed," as herbs for medicine.—*The Roses of Kilravock* (Spalding Club), p. 399.

[3] *Social Life in Morayshire*, 2nd series, p. 145.

request, the servant being sent out to the garden to upturn stones, under which the vermin nestled, and to gather them for bottling. That the quantity of them in demand was enormous we may see from a prescription by the great Dr. Pitcairn to heal the scurvy: "Take 2 lbs. of shavings of sarfa cut and sliced, boil in 3 gallons of wort, put barm in it, ½ lb. of crude antimony, with 4 ounces sharp-leaved docks, barrel it, then put in dried rosemary with the juice of 400 or 500 sclaters squeezed through linen into the barrel. When it is 20 days bottled drink it." Ague, the dreaded trouble in those marshy days, was combated by drugs which left the disease triumphant; for these concoctions were "mousear beaten with salt and vinegar applied to the wrists," or "a little bit of ox-dung drunk with half a scruple of masterwort." When Dr. Archibald Pitcairn is consulted in 1704 on a case of small-pox, he writes, "for the use of the noble and honourable family of March," a prescription wherein he recommends—"after the pox appears and fever is gone steep a handful of sheep's purles in a large mutchkin of hysop water, then pour it off and sweeten it with syrup of red poppies, and then drink it." Other medicines in common use contained brains of hares and foxes, snails burnt in the shell, powder of human skull and Egyptian mummy, burnt hoofs of horses, calcined cockle-shells, pigeon's blood, ashes of little frogs—like to the diabolical contents of the witches' cauldron in *Macbeth*.[1]

If the country mansion contained, as it often did, a copy of *The Poor Man's Physician*, by the famous John Moncrieff of Tippermalloch,[2] besides these remedies might be learned other cures, of which the surgeon was probably doubtful,

[1] Wodrow informs his wife that bezoar—concretion formed in the stomach of goats—is taken to cure small-pox. He bids her "let blood if your stitch continue and take a vomitic."—*Correspondence*, 1726. The *Pharmacopœia* of Royal College of Physicians, London, 1728, recommends such remedies as above; *Materia Medica* of 1744 for Edinburgh retains them. Pitcairn asserted that the doctors did not know how to treat small-pox, and laughed heartily at the two physicians who, he asserts, had killed by their treatment Sir R. Sibbald's daughters, while his own was as preposterous.—Chalmers' *Life of Ruddiman*, p. 31.

[2] "*The Poor Man's Physician; or, the Receits of the famous John Moncrief of Tippermalloch*, being a choice collection of simple and easy remedies for most distempers, very useful to all persons, especially those of a poorer condition. Third edit. carefully corrected and amended, to which is added the method of curing the small-pox and scurvy by the eminent Dr. Arch. Pitcairn." Edinburgh, 1731.

but in which the people still retained their faith intact. Here was to be read as remedy for "falling sickness" in children: "Take a little black sucking puppy (but for a girl take a bitch whelp), choke it, open it, take out the gall, put it all to the child in the time of the fit with a little tile-tree flower water, and you shall see him cured as it were by a miracle presently." For the whitlow in the finger: "Stop the finger into a cat's ear and it will be whole in half an hour." In case of pestilential fever: "Have a cataplasm of snails beaten and put to the soles of the feet." For watery humour in the eyes: "Put pigeon's blood hot to the eyes, or a young caller pigeon slit in the back." Among the concoctions, centauries, and vomitories are ingredients which it would be hateful, disgusting, to describe—not to speak of swallowing—which are recommended far on in the century by country practitioners, even after they were being discredited by the more enlightened men of the profession.[1] It says much for the vigorous constitutions of the people that under such a barbarous state of the "healing art" the rate of mortality of our forefathers was so moderate.

When any one was out of health or spirits a wiser and favourite recommendation was for the patient to go to Moffat Wells—the Buxton of Scotland—or to the "goat's milk."[2] In spite of difficulties from execrable roads, they travelled on horseback into the Highlands, where they drank the milk of goats as a sovereign cure for many an ailment. In those times many gentlemen went "to the goat's whey" annually, as now they go to Harrogate.

VIII

It was a dangerous thing to be ill, an expensive thing to die, and often a ruinous thing to be buried—the cost of a funeral sometimes being equal to a year's rental.[3] Whenever

[1] Thomson's *Life of Cullen*, ii. 564 *sq.*

[2] "In June," Wodrow writes in 1726 to Lord Grange, "all the ministers about Glasgow were out of town at the goat's milk."—*Analecta Scotica*, ii. 196. Thomson's *Life of Cullen; Arniston Memoirs*, p. 93.

[3] At John Grierson of Lag's death among the expenses are mentioned "2 bottels clarit when the sear cloath was put on; 1 bottel of clarit when the

the breath was out of the body the preparations were made: the winding-sheet of wool, the woollen stockings for the corpse's feet; the lyke-wake or watching by the dead night and day by watchers who received their frequent refreshment; the body laid out on view for all who wished to see the "corp" in the room, with chairs and other furniture covered with white linen. When means allowed it the chirurgeon half-embalmed the body and provided a cerecloth to envelope the corpse.[1] The invitations to the funeral having been sent out on folio gilt-edged sheets, friends came from far and near to pay their last respects to his memory, and their last attentions to his cellar. The feast was lavish and prolonged—the minister saying the blessing over the meat, of great length, which constituted the whole of his funeral service, and in which he "improved the occasion" with equal solemnity and prolixity. The glass went round with giddying rapidity. The sack, claret and ale from the stoups disappeared, and too often the mourners sat till they could not stand, and then with funereal hilarity or sodden solemnity the company followed the remains to the grave.[2] Drinking was the favourite vice of the century; it brought no shame, and it seemed to impair no constitution. A man who had himself enjoyed immensely many a festivity at his bosom friends' funerals was anxious that his neighbours should enjoy equally unstinted satisfaction at his own death. "For God's sake, give them a hearty drink" were a dying laird's touching

grave cloaths was put on," and at "the coffining where the ladys was 1 bottel clarit, 2 bottels white wine and 1 bottel canary." In fact, every stage of the ceremony was punctuated with drink.—Fergusson's *Laird of Lag*, p. 252.

[1] The "cerecloth" put on the body after a modified embalming, used among richer classes. In 1720 "ane large cerecloth £66 : 13 : 4 Scots" (£5 : 11s.) was the charge by the surgeon; in 1790 it cost £10 : 10s.—Duncan's *Faculty of Physicians in Glasgow*, p. 95. "Sear claith, oyl, frankincense, and other necessars" charged in 1716.—*Thanes of Cawdor*, p. 416. In 1699 "For 2 cearcloths for your ladies' corps £80, and oil and incense £4."—*Roses of Kilravock*, p. 388.

[2] In 1704 Lord Whitelaw, judge, was buried at the cost of £5189 Scots, or £423 sterg., nearly equal to two years' salary in those days.—Ramsay's *Scot. and Scotsmen*, ii. 74; Fergusson's *Laird of Lag*, pp. 251, 252. At the funeral entertainment of John Grierson of Lag there disappeared 8 dozen of wine, not to speak of potations of ale; at Sir Robert Grierson's obsequies there are charged by the innkeeper 10 doz. wine—leaving a copious drain in his own cellar to be accounted for. The "vivers" appear in a portentous bill of "rost geese" and turkeys, dish of neat's tongue, 2 doz. "mincht pies, rost pigg, tearts," capons, barrel of oysters, calf's head stewed with wine, etc. etc.

last words to his son.[1] No wonder English officers witnessing these functions pronounced "a Scots funeral to be merrier than an English wedding." The obsequies of a Highland laird or chief was a still more sumptuous affair. All friends and kinsmen within a hundred miles attended, and all the retainers and vassals were present.[2] The entertaining of guests continued for several days. A toast-master was chosen from the company at the feast; the healths were drunk vociferously, although the thanks returned were not always coherent; liquor was emptied in hogsheads. At last the cortège, miles long, set out to the kirkyard, perhaps many miles away, with torches flaring, coronachs chanting, or pibrochs wailing. No wonder many tales were told of such events happening often, as did really occur at the funeral of the mother of Forbes of Culloden, of the party arriving at the grave only to discover that the corpse had been left behind.[3]

In the Lowlands, in quieter style the procession passed on, while the kirk bell, hanging on a tree, was jerked into fitful tolling by the beadle. The ladies (who in the beginning of the century were clad in their gayest and brightest dresses) walked to the kirkyard gate, while the male mourners only stood by the grave.[4] If a gentleman had lost his wife, etiquette and supposed emotion alike required that the husband should remain disconsolate behind in the house, in dangerous proximity to the consolatory drink left by the departed guests.[5]

In Highlands and Lowlands it was a great occasion for the poor, the blue-gowns, and the vagrants. Usually a laird left in his will so much meal to be distributed to the poor at his burial, and every beggar or cripple within a radius of fifty miles, who had scented his prey from afar, assembled for the chance of food or drink.[6] The presence of this ragged, greedy,

[1] Ramsay, ii. 75; Somerville, p. 372.

[2] Burt's *Letters*, i. 219.

[3] Ramsay's *Scotland and Scotsmen*, ii. 75; Burton's *Lives of Lovat and Forbes*, p. 302.

[4] *Caldwell Papers*, i. 260.

[5] In 1789 James Boswell writes after the death of his wife: "It is not customary in Scotland for a husband to attend his wife's funeral; but I resolved, if I possibly could, to do the last honours myself."—*Boswelliana*, p. 151, edited by C. Rogers.

[6] At the funeral of Alexander, Earl of Eglinton, in 1723, there assembled

clamorous crowd in the courtyard added a sordid element to the scene.

When the death occurred in a family of high standing the door of the church in which the deceased gentleman was wont to worship was painted black, and decorated with white patches, resembling big commas or pears or tadpoles, which were meant to represent tears of the family for the loss of the departed.[1]

When the accounts were rendered the expenses were portentous—the bills for mourning, food, drink, and carriages amounting to formidable dimensions,—and were not easy to defray out of an income which was probably two-thirds paid in sheep, oats, capons, eggs; and certainly the heavily wadsetted estate could not bear one burden more. There was little to set by for tocherless daughters, or for sons who must seek a living in any occupation, however humble. The widow, be she wife of noble, baronet, or simple laird, was provided with a jointure which needed painful economy.[2] Many a dowager-countess in an Edinburgh flat kept her little state on £100 a year, and a laird's or baronet's wife managed to maintain a genial but frugal hospitality on an allowance of £50 or £40; nor was it thought unjust that a country gentleman, who had received with his wife a handsome tocher or dowry of 3000 merks, should leave her an annuity of 300 merks, £16, as a sufficient provision. Thus people lived, died, were buried, and bequeathed in the olden days.

between 900 and 1000 beggars, many of them from Ireland, as £30 was left for distribution in alms.—Chambers' *Annals*, iii. 555.

[1] *Parish of Shotts*, by W. Grossart, p. 207:—"1742, June 28. For colouring and tearing the church doors and lettering them, and colouring and tearing the wall opposite to your burial-place and lettering the same, 8s. Scots" (account to the laird of Murdoston). This custom of covering the house front door with black drapery covered with tears in silver paper prevailed in France. Warrender's *Marchmont and the Homes of Polwarth*, p. 13. "Painting the doors at Nairn for the funeral" is a charge in 1755 at the death of a laird of Kilravock.—*Roses of Kilravock*, p. 428.

[2] The laird of Bemersyde leaves his widow a jointure of 1300 merks, and there was expended at his funeral £142, including £62 mourning articles from Kelso for his daughters, down to 16s. 8d. for a boll of meal to the poor and 2s. for the bell-man.—Russell's *Haigs of Bemersyde*. Sir James Smollett of Bonhill in 1735 leaves his widow a jointure of £44 : 8 : 10.—Chambers' *Life of Smollett*, p. 217. Curious instances of these small provisions are given in Murray's *Old Cardross*, p. 86.

CHAPTER II

COUNTRY SOCIETY AND COUNTRY MANNERS

1750–1800

I

UNTIL about 1760 the life of Scottish country society remained frugal, homely, and provincial. At that period, however, there were distinct signs of a great change coming over tastes, manners, and habits. Wider interests began to stir in the country, more comfortable ways of living to be adopted by the people. The rise of fortunes, which we have elsewhere described, due to the sudden increase of rental from land and profits from trade, wrought a transformation in the style, tone, and domestic economy of Scotland.

As old country houses became decayed or insufficient for the more exacting tastes of the age, new mansions were built which contrasted strangely with the homely homes of simpler days—homes which, if not broken down to form byres and dykes, were left to be occupied by the farmers, with ruder ways even than their lairdly predecessors. The low-ceilinged rooms, the dark and draughty passages, the narrow, sashless, small-paned windows, the walls four or five feet thick, were absent from the new mansions, which, if they had little architectural beauty, had more light, more space, more comfort. By the disappearance of these old-fashioned houses the country lost little in picturesqueness, for they had been usually hopelessly commonplace, with little that was quaint save in the crow-stepped gables and rounded turrets. What was characteristic and striking in ancient Scotch building was to be found chiefly in

the larger mansions and castles, with their grim, venerable walls, the high slated towers, those battlements which had forgotten their purpose in peaceful times. Unhappily, many of those fine old residences, dating from the sixteenth century, with their characteristic style and sombre dignity, were removed to make way for others of an "improved" class, which consisted in the mock classic, and accorded with the highest taste of the period.[1]

There were equal changes going on within the walls. In the old rooms had been the rough, solid furniture, which had been made by the joiners in the country towns, or in the big woodyards of Edinburgh or Glasgow, where there was a supply of timber kept ready for every purpose, from axles to sideboards, from joists to tables, and household articles were made by the carpenters to suit each customer—and fine oak pieces they often were, which, after being discarded, another generation began to prize.[2] By the middle of the century there were two upholsterers set up in business in the High Street, Edinburgh, who imported goods from England, and gratified the new demand for carpets and drawing-room furniture of finer finish. The walls of the rooms either had remained coloured plaster or had their nakedness covered in rich houses with arras, or leather, for paper was almost never seen, and never made in Scotland. In 1745 an adventurous tradesman began a business in "painted paper for hanging walls" in Edinburgh—the maker confining himself to two colours with designs of a rudimentary taste.[3] The recess-beds with plaiding curtains vanished from drawing-room and bedroom; the pewter plates and dishes went the way of their "timber" predecessors, and china and delf came in their stead, greatly to the encouragement of the struggling industry in Leith and Glasgow; the pewter "stoups" in which claret had been served, when bottles cost 4d. each, gave place to

[1] Macgibbon and Ross's *Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland*, vol. iv.

[2] Such was the timber-yard kept in Glasgow by the brother-in-law of John and William Hunter, the great anatomists, called "Amen" Buchanan, from having been precentor in the episcopal meeting-house.—Paget's *Life of John Hunter*, p. 35.

[3] Arnot's *History of Edinburgh*, 1789, p. 600.

green glass bottles, which the glass-blowers in Leith were then making.

The hours of dinner rose from one o'clock of the early part of the century to two, and even to three o'clock in fashionable circles, and with the change of hour came grateful changes of service and diet. The food was not always now put down on table all at once, and two courses came to tempt the palate and appease the appetite.[1] The improvement in agriculture enabled people to have fresh meat all the year round, so that it was no longer necessary to kill the "mart" and subsist on salted beef or mutton for half the year. Only quaint-fashioned gentry followed the olden ways. There was Lord Polkemmet, who, with his docile household, methodically ate the animal from nose to tail, going down one side and up the other, till, to the relief of the family, the salt carcass was finished—only, however, making way for another. The memories of those old-world experiences lasted in the minds of persons who survived to more luxurious days. The ancient lady who still continued in the next century the venerable custom, and whose ox killed in November lasted her half the year, because she partook of it only with friends on Sunday, not long before her death urged her neighbour, Sir Thomas Lauder, to dine with her next Sabbath, as her earthly career was nearly run, saying, in vivid metaphor, "For eh, Sir Thamas, we're terrible near the tail end noo!"[2]

Yet even with a more varied mode of diet, though the everlasting broth (or "broath"—for so all society spelt and pronounced it) and the salt meat and "kain hens" were not inevitable at a repast, there was still severe plainness in the cooking and monotony in the fare; while haggis, cockyleeky, singed sheep's head, friars' chicken, and cabbiclaw simultaneously allured the appetite.[3] Even at a nobleman's

[1] The fare in houses of men of position and wealth can be learned from the culinary records of Arniston House in 1748, when Lord President Dundas lived: "Dec. 4, Sunday—Cockyleeky, boiled beef and greens, roast goose (2 bottles of claret, 2 white wine, 2 strong ale). Supper—Mutton stewed with turnips, drawn eggs (1 bottle claret, 1 white wine, 1 strong ale). Monday, dinner—Pea soup, boiled turkey, roast beef, apple pie. Supper—Mutton steak, drawn eggs, and gravy potatoes, my lord's broath. Tuesday, dinner—Sheep's-head broth, shoulder of mutton, roast goose, smothered rabbits."—Omond's *Arniston Memoirs*, p. 108.

[2] Cockburn's *Memorials*, p. 66.

[3] Topham's *Letters*, p. 156.

table about 1760[1] there might be no vegetables seen; and the English traveller, about 1770, alleged that the turnips—still always called "neeps"—appeared as dessert.[2] Things, however, changed a little later, and it could no longer be maliciously asserted that the Scots had no fruit but turnips.

Country sports and occupations had somewhat changed. Hawking became obsolete;[3] and gentlemen no longer prided themselves on the merits of their falcons. But shooting became more a pursuit; for besides the abundant sport on the wide-spreading moors, if there were fewer wild duck in morass and bog, there were partridges in fields where the newly-grown turnips, potatoes, and corn gave cover, which a few years before they would have sought for in vain in the bare waste or marsh. Agriculture and forestry had become a new pastime and occupation in the country. Gentlemen were everywhere busy improving their residences, as much outside as inside; and where ploughed fields and heathery wastes had come up to the courtyard or front door, were now avenues of lime, or oak, or elm. Planting and farming, in fact, had become the absorbing passion of lairds, young and old; and a very expensive one they often found it. They planted in every hollow and on every hill, and eagerly watched their saplings grow to trees, to the dismay of the farmers, who regarded them as destructive to the soil and the crops. Lords of Session, when they came back from the law-courts to their country houses, were full of eagerness to return to their woods. Lord Kames and Lord Dunsinane, the moment they arrived at their homes, although it was dark, were out with lanterns in their hands to see how the trees had grown since last they saw them; and Lord Auchinleck was up every morning by five o'clock and in the "policy" pruning his young wood. No longer did lairds buy, as their fathers had bought, acorns by the pound, and chestnut seed by the ounce, to rear in the shrubbery. They

[1] Wesley writes in 1780: "When I was in Scotland first [1762], even at a nobleman's table we had only flesh meat of one kind, and no vegetables of any kind; but now they are as plentiful here as in England."—*Journal*, vol iv. p. 418.

[2] *Humphrey Clinker;* Topham's *Letters from Edinburgh*, p. 229.

[3] About 1750 in the *Caledonian Mercury* advertisements are still frequent of the finding or the loss of hawks, "with bells and silver vervels."

planted them in thousands and tens of thousands in the open ground.

With increase of incomes, and through wider intercourse with society, there came more expenses—the taste for dressing better, entertaining more, and travelling farther, for that improved roads now permitted. There is clear witness to the change in coaching ways in the fact[1] that formerly all the coaches or chaises were brought over expensively from Holland, France, or England; that only in 1738 a coach-work was first set up in Edinburgh by a man trained in London, whence he brought north the tools which had hitherto been unknown in the city. Now, where their fathers had modestly gone on horseback, with ladies on pillion behind, the richer lairds had their coach, with their horses of a finer breed than the ill-groomed, small, yet clumsy brutes which had sufficed in the past. Though households were conducted on less frugal order than before, when servants even in the wealthier establishments had salt meat three days a week, and broth or soup-maigre the rest, wages were moderate, even in a mansion of high degree.[2]

There was one pernicious custom—the giving of "vails" or presents, which really had the effect of keeping down the wages of men-servants. This obnoxious system was even more inveterate and burdensome in England, where it was impossible to dine at a rich man's board without having heavy social blackmail silently extorted. The impecunious author could not dine with his noble patron, nor the half-starved, full-familied curate dine with his bishop, without leaving behind him a guinea in the hands of menials much richer than himself; and, in consequence, was forced to pawn his watch, if he had one, or do without dinner the rest of the week, to defray the expense of sitting at his lordship's table for an hour. The departing guest

[1] Arnot's *Hist. of Edinburgh*, p. 599.—Before the end of the century Edinburgh built coaches which were exported to principal towns on the Baltic and to St. Petersburg. "In 1783 a thousand crane-backed carriages ordered for Paris."—Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, iv. 35.

[2] House servants at Gordonston in 1740 were paid: "Two gentlemen, £10; five maids, £5:6:4; two cooks, £5; two porters, £3; groom, £5:5s." In 1758 the English housekeeper—who arrives riding pillion—had £7 "for wedges, including tea and sugar."—Dunbar's *Social Life in Former Times*, 2nd series, p. 156.

had to run the gauntlet of a row of expectant men in livery, and two or three guineas was a common sum—ten guineas not an unknown sum—to leave with footmen after being entertained at a great man's house.

This also was the practice in Scotland, although on a scale proportionate to its more limited means. There was an incessant social tax of "drink money," "card money," "guest money," which was becoming intolerable. The origin of the practice can in Scotland be traced to the old custom of giving ale or drink-money to every one who did a service, or performed any work. In old account-books of the early part of the century the entries are constant of so much ale being given, or money to buy it. If a man brought to the laird's house a pair of shoes, or an account for its payment, there was given "drink money," or "a gill of ale," or "pigtail tobacco"; if the mason had built the churchyard dyke, or the wright had set up a pew, the Kirk-Session allowed him "drink money"; if the workmen had repaired a causeway, or mended the town clock, the Town Council handed them "drink money."[1] As a matter of course, the servants in houses shared with servants outside the pleasant custom. It could be borne as long as it amounted only to a few pence; but contact with English fashion had brought larger expectations to the menial's countenance, and heavier demands on the guest's purse. At last the gentlemen in Scotland rebelled against this system, and resolved that they would continue it no longer, preferring to give higher wages to their servants than allow them to sponge on the forced liberality of their friends. Gentlemen in Aberdeenshire and Midlothian, and members of the Bar—most of whom were persons connected with the best families in the country—bound themselves no longer to give or allow their servants to receive "guest money" in future. The resolution was carried out with such determination that the rapacious practice was at once put an end to, and higher wages were given to the men of livery.[2]

[1] "To the wright to drink for making and setting up caise for the knock on the stairs, 5s. Scots."; "¼ lib pigtail for workman."—*Account Book of Sir J. Foulis*, pp. 57, 371. In estimate for repairing Morton kirk, 1722, is included "item, to a morning drink each day, or 18d. per rood more, £6 : 1 : 3."—*Morton Presby. Records.*

[2] Arnot's *Hist. of Edinburgh*, p. 375. The beginning of the movement towards

Not so in England. Though, following the example of Scottish gentry, the Grand Jury of Northumberland, and also of Wiltshire, pledged themselves to discourage all giving of vails, the private resolution of some economical country gentlemen could not change the custom of fashionable society.[1]

II

As the century advanced, as the roads were improved, as communication between different parts of the country became easier, the intercourse of town and country people became more frequent, and old provincialism of life, speech, dress, and manners diminished.

Gradually the means of communication by stage-coaches increased between the important towns, as by the rise of wealth and improvement of roads the number of travellers increased.[2] The slow pace of olden times was quickened in the new period. When the famous failure of Fordyce in London was announced on that Black Monday in June 1772, bringing disaster to almost every private bank and to many thousands in Scotland, the calamitous news was brought down by a gentleman posting in the short space of forty-three hours, for he travelled night and day.[3] By 1786 there had been made a remarkable improve-

abolishing vails Arnot attributes to incidents connected with the performances of Townley's farce of *High Life below Stairs* in 1759; when the footmen, who were allowed to frequent the gallery free, while their masters sat in the boxes, were filled with resentment at the ridicule cast on their ways, pretensions, and extortions. They presented a threatening letter to the manager, Mr. Love, who next night coolly read the menace from the stage. The footmen disturbed the play with their din and wild noise, till they were driven out of the house, and the privilege of gratis admission was withdrawn. A similar incident, if not the very one ascribed to Edinburgh, occurred in Drury Lane Theatre.

[1] Lecky's *Hist. of England*, i. 572; Roberts' *Social Hist. of Southern Counties*, pp. 32, 34. As Sir Richard Steele passed with Bishop Hoadly from a duke's house through a formidable row of lackeys in waiting, conscious that he had no money to give, and more need to borrow, he told them instead that he should be delighted to see them any night at Drury Lane to see his play.

[2] For the fly from Edinburgh to Aberdeen the fare was £2 : 2s.

[3] *Scots Magazine*, June 1772. The partner in Forbes' Bank set forth after an embezzling clerk, and made the journey to London in forty hours, allowing two hours in Newcastle, and some time in York.—*Memoirs of a Banking House*, p. 57.

ment on the old arrangements and the old speed. Instead of the coach that had gone once a month from Edinburgh to London, taking from twelve to sixteen days on the expedition, there were two coaches which started from the Grassmarket every day, and arrived at the Capital in sixty hours.[1] Even Glasgow at last came in touch with London. Although its population had increased with rapid strides, alike in numbers and in prosperity, until 1788[2] there was no direct transit to London for a population of 60,000. Any who wished to travel southwards were obliged to ride the whole way, or to set sail from Borrowstounness by a trading vessel, which in foul weather was a month on the voyage from the town; or to ride to Newcastle, where he found the ponderous Newcastle waggon, with six wheels and eight horses, which carried heavy goods, and such passengers as could find accommodation under the canvas with the straw-littered floor. Twenty-five miles a day it made on its lumbering course, and it took eighteen days to finish the journey, stopping two Sundays on the road. If these means were not expeditious enough, the more luxurious citizen took the stage-coach (day's journey) to Edinburgh, whence he travelled south. The citizen who had made a tour so remarkable, to a destination so remote, became an object of interest to his fellow-townsmen.[3] By 1788 enterprise was sufficiently awakened to venture on the establishment of a direct stage-coach to run from Glasgow to London; and this, being one of the quick coaches lately instituted by Palmer, performed the journey of 405 miles in sixty-five hours, at the cost of £4:16s. to each inside passenger.[4] Swifter arrangements had also brought the west country nearer to the

[1] Creech mentions as a remarkable fact that in 1782 a person may set out on Sunday afternoon—"after divine service" he is careful to add—from Edinburgh, may stay a whole day in London, and be again in Edinburgh on Saturday at six in the morning.—*Fugitive Pieces*, p. 68.

[2] *Glasgow Past and Present*, ii. 144; Strang's *Clubs of Glasgow*, p. 132.

[3] The stage-coach between Edinburgh and Glasgow in twelve hours, starting at eight o'clock in the morning—the fare 12s. for each passenger, and 10d. a stone for all luggage in excess of one stone. The coach from Edinburgh to Stirling cost 8s.—*Scots Magazine*, 1766, p. 273. In 1799 the speed was increased, till it only took six hours between Edinburgh and Glasgow.—Chambers' *Dom. Annals*, iii. 612.

[4] Strang's *Clubs of Glasgow*, p. 132; *Glasgow Past and Present*, iii. 436.

east, and by the end of the century Glasgow folk could be carried by stage-coach to Edinburgh in six hours.

With this greater speed of communication, and the more frequent intercourse of society and interchange of business, the wretched hovels which had long done duty for inns, and the miserable hostelries which alone had offered accommodation to travellers, began to disappear. In Edinburgh, comfortable, cleanly houses, which bore the name, then strange in Scotland, of "hotels," were built;[1] and many Englishmen who, bent on pleasure or on business, began to travel north of the border towards the end of the century, had experiences different from, and incalculably pleasanter than, those of their countrymen who in less progressive times had ventured on Scottish soil and sojourned in malodorous Scottish inns. Not that the comparative improvement in food, attendance, rooms, and beds in North Britain could satisfy any one accustomed to those charming old hostelries in the south, where comfort reigned over all; for still in remote districts and far-off towns, even into the nineteenth century, the disorder and dirt of olden times showed no signs of disappearing, and the traveller resigned himself to the disagreeables of each tavern in his route, in vain hopes that the next might compensate for the miseries of the last.

The post increased in speed and frequency as roads became more passable, and correspondents became more numerous. The letters had been carried to Glasgow by a post-boy on horseback; but in 1797, it is triumphantly said, "they are now carried in a single horse-chaise by a person properly armed." Edinburgh by 1780 had no less than six letter-carriers to distribute among a population of 70,000 souls; and throughout the country, instead of having only thirty-four post-towns as at the beginning of the century, there were a hundred and sixty-four at its close. This intercommunication of town with town, and country with city, was affecting the whole social life.[2]

[1] Creech's *Fugitive Pieces*, p. 69; Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker*.

[2] In 1765 the postage of letters carried on stage (50 miles) was reduced in England from 3d. to 1d., and in Scotland from 2d. to 1d.—Arnot's *Hist. of Edinburgh*, p. 540. Letters carried from Edinburgh to London in 1790 in four days.—*Ibid.* p. 536.

III

We have seen how in the early part of the century it was extremely difficult to find occupation for sons at home, or a career abroad, which could afford them a decent livelihood, far less gain them a fortune. The common jibe was that when a Scotsman left his native soil he never cared to return, and that though he might die for his country he would not live in it. Certainly at that period there was some semblance of truth in the taunt. There was no employment for a man of genius or ambition in a country so poor. A man of enterprise went to London to try his fortune as naturally as a clever Breton goes to Paris. Brilliant poets and politicians, painters, doctors, and architects would have starved at home or died in obscurity, and they sought, therefore, their careers four hundred miles off. Had Dr. Cheyne, famed as physician and bon-vivant, remained in Scotland, the poor fees he would have got could never have allowed him to attain his huge bulk of thirty stone, nor could he with that Falstaffian frame of his have been able to pant up a turnpike stair, and squeeze through narrow entries to his patients in an Edinburgh fourth flat. So to England he went; to be followed, by and by, by Dr. Armstrong to find patients for his physic and patrons for his verse, and still later by the Hunters to gain great reputations, and by the Fordyces to make pleasant fortunes and profitable practices, while Dr. Cullen wrought laboriously at home to earn small fees. Frugal town councils cared not to spend money in magnificent public buildings, still less in churches, to ornament a city, and gentlemen rarely reared mansions worthy of their estate; wherefore architects capable of brilliant designs would have been confined to making plans which a respectable stone-mason could have drawn. Though distinguished draughtsmen did occasionally do work—and good work—in their own country, it was abroad they studied their art and in England they practised it—James Gibb, who became architect of Radcliffe Library at Oxford and St. Martin's Church in London; Robert Mylne, who designed Blackfriars Bridge; and the brothers Adam, who had no scope

for their talents at home, any more than James Watt for his inventive genius. It was in England Scots artists—Aikman, Strange, Ramsay—sought their public and their patrons. Colin Maclaurin, the brilliant young natural philosopher, eagerly had given up his pittance of £60 a year as Professor of Mathematics to become travelling tutor to a young gentleman; David Hume was glad to become governor to a hopelessly imbecile peer; and, later still, Adam Smith quitted his chair in the University of Glasgow to earn a better living as travelling companion to a youthful duke.

With the development of trade, however, bringing increase of wealth, there came more encouragement at home to men of talent and energy in professions and business and commerce; while for the adventurous there were being opened avenues to fortunes far afield in India and the Indies, where they planted and bought estates, and returned to buy properties and settle down as rich lairds. By the end of the century Scots gentlemen not merely secured good posts for their sons, but their influence was able to get good posts for even their dependants, as cadets in the army and civil servants in the "Company"; and many sons of crofters and mechanics were sent abroad, where they won reputations and fortunes and titles.[1]

Nor was there any department of business or any profession in England where Scots were not found making careers with a pertinacious success, which brought on them and their country many a jeer from southern lips and lampoons from Grub Street. Sir Pertinax Macsycophant of Macklin's *Man of the World*,[2] who makes his way by cunning, cringing, and

[1] "How many of these fine lads did my father and Charles Grant send out to India! Some that throve, some that only passed, some that made a name we were all proud of, and not one that I heard of that disgraced the homely rearing of their humbly-positioned but gentle-born parents. . . . Sir Charles Forbes was the son of a small farmer in Aberdeenshire. Sir William Grant, the Master of the Rolls, was a mere peasant—his uncles floated my father's timber down the Spey. General William Grant was a footboy in my uncle Rothie's family. Sir Colquhoun Grant, though a wood-setter's child, was but poorly reared. Sir William Macgregor, whose history was most romantic of all, was such another. The list could be easily lengthened did my memory serve."—*Memoirs of a Highland Lady*, p. 99 (Miss Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurchus).

[2] The original title of the piece was the "True-born Scotsman," which was

wily persistence, by "booing and aye booing," and Sir Archy Macsarcasm with his cantankerous soul in *Love à la Mode*, contrasting with the generous Irishman of the play, were considered admirably accurate portraits of the typical North Briton. In fact, it would have been regarded as incongruous to put on the stage or in a satire a Scotsman without meanness and pawkiness, or to mention Scotland without allusion to its filth and its poverty, as it would have been to represent a Jew without his red beard and his sibilant "cent per cent," or Teague without his blunders and his brogue. The unpopularity of Lord Bute, the royal favourite, was more owing to his being a Scotsman than to being an incompetent statesman. That a Scots regiment should be called out to put down a Wilkes riot in London stirred popular indignation more than proposing to employ Red Indians to put down the white rebels in America. So extreme was this national antipathy that when Garrick produced Home's *Fatal Discovery*, he was obliged to conceal its source and make an Oxford student stand godfather to the play; and the success of the piece instantly ceased when the Scotsman, greedy of praise, proclaimed his authorship.[1]

This antipathy was reciprocated heartily. Scotsmen winced under the sneers, and they were embittered by the spleen of those "factious barbarians," as David Hume called them. In patriotic effort to magnify their own qualities, they preposterously over-rated everything and everybody Scottish, till the unread and unreadable *Epigoniad* of Wilkie—that grotesque lout of genius—was declared by Hume and many compatriots worthy of a place beside *Paradise Lost*, and Home's *Douglas* was proclaimed as fine a play as *Macbeth*, which its author thoroughly believed. Time ended these international reprisals, and brought peace to this uncivil war.

prohibited. Horace Walpole said he had heard there was little merit in the play except the resemblance of Sir Pertinax to twenty thousand Scotsmen.—*Letters*, vol. viii. p. 44.

[1] Mackenzie's *Life and Writings of Home*, p. 63.

IV

Amid the many important economical and social changes which came gradually over the country—growing wealth, wider knowledge of the world, greater appreciation of the gains of civilisation—we may expect to find a larger appreciation of art. This expectation is but moderately fulfilled. While we have seen that artists had scanty encouragement from gentlemen who were too poor to pay for pictures and too uncivilised to care for them, in the latter half of the century they at least could earn a livelihood, and country houses began to show upon their walls paintings—not very many, not very precious—where thirty years before had been blank wastes of dingy-coloured plaster or discoloured oak. Several youths had been engaged in drawing in that poor little "school" in Edinburgh that called itself an "academy," under the patronage of St. Luke, where they aimed at greatness and often ended as house-painters, copying "bustoes" and poor reproductions under a querulous and ill-paid teacher. There they gained all their acquaintance with the achievements of art, supplemented by seeing in a country house fourth-rate pictures picked up by gentlemen on their foreign tours. Patrons helped impecunious promising youths to go to Rome—the studio of the world—where they first beheld the masterpieces of Italy, sorely to their humbling.

In 1736 Allan Ramsay, settled in his Luckenbooth bookshop, wrote to his friend John Smibert—another of Scotland's deserting painters: "My son Allan has been pursuing his studies since he was a dozen years auld, has been with Mr. Haffridg in London for two years; has been since at home painting like a Raphael, sets off for the Seat of the Beast beyond the Alps. I am sweer to part with him."[1] So young Allan went off to Rome, where the Scots classic painter Gavin Hamilton—another deserter—received all his young countrymen with welcome. In a few years Ramsay returned to Edinburgh to paint admirable portraits full of veracity, expression, and force, as well as to become a man of letters and of

[1] *The Gentle Shepherd*, with Illustrations of the Scenery, 1814, i. 64.

fashion. Judges, lords, and gentry he limned, and his portraits perpetuate the notable features of a generation before Raeburn practised his skill. But what was there in Scotland to satisfy a man of ambition? The demand for pictures was limited and the pay was poor. When a laird had his own portrait and his wife's taken, or a lord of session was depicted, complacent in his new robes, his desire to encourage art was satiated, for low ceilings and small rooms gave little accommodation for frames, especially in Edinburgh flats. So Scotland again lost in 1756 its only competent artist, and London absorbed the neat, keen-eyed, hot-tempered, genial Ramsay—a scholar, a linguist, a conversationalist, whom even Johnson praised in spite of his being a Scotsman, who gained success, becoming master painter to George III., whose frequent portraits he painted, and whose repast of boiled mutton and turnips he ate when his royal master had finished, while Queen Charlotte conversed in German with her favourite polyglot artist.[1]

When Scotland was in an utterly forlorn state as regards art, a project unhappily entered into the heads of worthy Andrew and Robert Foulis, most excellent printers, whose scholarly editions of classics in beautiful type and accurate texts were winning honour to them. This project was to found a great school of art in Glasgow—the seat of tobacco, tape, and the sugar trade. In their pilgrimages abroad to visit libraries and examine editions of classics, they collected some pictures which the good artless men thought rare bargains of great value; they secured a room in the hospitable precincts of the college; they hired two or three teachers, and opened their academy to develop art in 1753. Some scholars did come to learn designing, and made copies of pictures and "bustoes," which were sold to encourage native talent. Unluckily, tobacco lords cared little for fine arts; pictures did not go off; and students did not come in. Though the enthusiasm of the estimable founders was hard to damp, the crisis came at last to this misplaced venture. Among the closing scenes of the tragedy was the spectacle of a waggon lumbering along the road to London in 1775, accompanied by Robert Foulis (his

[1] Cunningham's *British Painters*, v. 34; Chambers' *Eminent Scotsmen* (*sub voce*).

brother, fortunately, was dead), and his faithful man beside him, escorting, as it had been a hearse, the freight of spurious masterpieces and unsold copies. After an Exhibition, which had scarcely a spectator, there followed the auction by the remorseless hammer, which knocked down for fabulously low prices cherished "Raphaels" that Raphael never saw. Then came the end. Robert Foulis felt the hand of death upon him, and when Dr. William Hunter, to cheer his forlorn friend, had offered to get the king to see the Exhibition, he answered, "It doesn't signify. I shall soon be in the presence of the King of kings"—which was true, for the poor man fell ill and died in Edinburgh as he was proceeding on his disconsolate journey home.[1]

Still, one or two of the lads who had sat in the benches of the now dismantled academy were to win some little fame. There was James Tassie, the stone-mason, who learned modelling, and afterwards made his name by his charming medallion portraits and beautiful imitations of gems and cameos in his secret "white enamel paste." There, too, David Allan, the queer, mean-looking, pock-pitted, threadbare lad, served seven years' apprenticeship, who after his return from Rome turned his hand to depicting rural life. His illustrations of Scots songs, which delighted Burns, and his drawings for the *Gentle Shepherd*, giving admirable representations of cottage interiors, of rural ways and humours and habits, displayed a genuine Hogarthian humour, with such total absence of grace that, as Allan Cunningham says, his shepherdesses were more adapted to scare crows than to allure lovers.[2] For this almost forgotten artist can be claimed the merit of being the earliest of Scottish genre painters, the precursor of those delineators of domestic scenes and humours of whom Wilkie was the greatest.

In the now deserted rooms for a time had also studied Alexander Runciman, who after his return from Rome abandoned his beloved landscape-painting, because no one cared for it, and became as full of enthusiasm for the favourite

[1] *Notices of Literary Hist. of Glasgow* (Maitland Club), p. 40.

[2] Cunningham's *British Painters*, vi. 21; *The Gentle Shepherd*, with Illustrations of the Scenery, an Appendix containing the Memoirs of David Allan, the Scots Hogarth, 2 vols. 1814.

classic historical scenes which then filled acres of canvas in the Royal Academy, but found place in few country houses in Scotland; for what mortal could long endure the sight upon his walls of "Sigismunda weeping over the heart of Tancred," or "Job in distress," or that theme on which every historical painter of the day tried his skill, "Agrippina landing with the ashes of Germanicus"? Into Runciman's studio men of letters and law—Robertson and Kames and Monboddo—loved to come to chat and watch at work the exuberant man brimming over with interest in everything. Ambitious of emulating the work of Michel Angelo in the Sistine Chapel, he set to work to paint for his friend Sir John Clerk of Penicuik scenes from Ossian, which since 1762 kindled admiration in enthusiastic bosoms for the mist and mystery of the north, the moaning ocean on the wind-swept Isles, the magniloquent, shadowy, and melancholy heroes. The scaffold was raised, and there he lay, lying in painful postures—contracting a disease from which he ultimately died one day as he entered his house in 1785.

Portrait-painters were usually sure of customers in Edinburgh; and amongst others David Martin, who has perpetuated for us the features of Jupiter Carlyle, Lord Kames, Hume, Benjamin Franklin, was painting and engraving for forty years. But in 1785 another artist arose to eclipse all rivals—Henry Raeburn, who left his goldsmith's shop to study design entirely by himself; for Martin would not show him how to mix colours, though he lent him pictures to copy. When only twenty-two he began to practise his art, and everything prospered with the "lad in George Street," as envious Martin spoke of him with a snarl, from the time he set up his easel and the young pretty widow called to have her portrait taken, with the result that in a month's time she made an admirable picture and began to be an admirable wife. To the studio in George Street, and afterwards in York Place, what a wonderful succession and variety of customers came to sit upon that high platform on which the painter placed them, and felt his dark keen eye fixed on them as he stepped back to contemplate his subject, resting his chin on his fingers, as he stands in his own portrait, before applying his swift, unerring strokes to the canvas! Everybody who

was anybody sat to him—nobles and gentlemen to add to a family gallery, rubicund judges, shrewd writers and advocates whose faces bespoke "an excellent practice," ministers and professors of note, men of letters and science, Highland chiefs "all plaided and plumed," young ladies who still were beauties and old ladies who had once been toasts, from whose "speaking likenesses" one almost expects to hear the good Scots tongue speak forth.[1]

Yet another artist has his distinct place in the social life of Scotland—the first of its landscape-painters. Alexander Nasmyth had returned to his native Edinburgh from Ramsay's studio, where he had been one of the five assistants that filled in the details and backgrounds for the busy court portrait-painter. Of course he took to painting portraits, and to him we owe the precious sketch of his friend Robert Burns in 1789. He had, however, cause to abandon that department. His political opinions were pronounced—the keen "rights of men" type of the day—and he lacked the gift of holding his tongue. Naturally, douce citizens and Tory lairds were wroth at listening to wild utterances, which they could not resent without spoiling their reposeful expression. Nasmyth, therefore, prudently turned from depicting the features of customers whom he made irascible to painting the face of nature, which betrays no emotion. It was a well-timed change. Appreciation of beauty and wildness in scenery was springing up. No longer would anybody like painter Northcote pass over Mt. Cenis with night-cowl drawn tight over his eyes, not caring for one glimpse of Alpine glory. Gray, the poet, returned from his Highland tour in 1765 proclaiming that "the mountains were ecstatic and ought to be visited once a year. None but these monstrous children of God know how to join so much beauty with so much horror."[2] By 1780 Englishmen were touring through Scotland, and knew more of its lochs and mountains, which Johnson had called "protuberances," than Scotsmen themselves. Country gentlemen were busy improving their grounds and adding picturesqueness to their homes, and with this taste Nasmyth's landscapes harmonised. Noblemen and

[1] Cunningham's *British Painters*, v. 204; Chambers' *Eminent Scotsmen*.

[2] *Gray's Works* (Gosse's edition), vol. iii. p. 223.

lairds consulted him how to set out their "policies" to advantage, and no better counsellor could be got than he who had inherited from his father the taste of an architect, and transmitted to his son James, the notable engineer, his skill as mechanic. When the Duke of Atholl consulted him as to how he could get trees planted in inaccessible spots, he got tin canisters, filled them with seed, and fired them from a little cannon towards the required nooks, where they sprang up and in time became stalwart trees.[1]

For the first time in many a town and country house were to be seen pictures of Scots woodland or mountain scenery, due to the hand of Nasmyth, who founded a school of landscape-painting which had true scholars in his own son Patrick and Thomson of Duddingston.[2]

Still, notwithstanding these efforts to spread art and increase taste, when the next century began the public were without interest in it; and it is said there was no market for any pictures except portraits by Raeburn.[3]

V

After this digression into the region of art we return to the common ways and manners of society, in which time was working many a change.

Ladies, after the middle of the century, were altering greatly in habits, taste, and dress.[4] By the more easy and frequent intercourse with towns, city modes were passing into every rural mansion. The national plaid was abandoned about 1750 and no longer graced their forms and piquantly hid their features; and in chip hats, toupees, and sacques, they followed the style of Edinburgh, which had been copied from London. Education changed slowly, and they still left school ignorant of geography, history, and grammar, though they

[1] *Autobiography of James Nasmyth*, edited by Smiles.

[2] Baird's *Life of Thomson of Duddingston;* Brydall's *Hist.*

[3] Cockburn's *Memorials*, p. 244.

[4] In 1750 there were only six milliners in Edinburgh.—Ramsay's *Scotland and Scotsmen.* Two sisters of Thomson, author of the *Seasons*, had become mantua makers.

spelt more respectably and spoke a little less broadly. They might know occasionally a little Italian—just enough to misunderstand it.[1] They were deft with their fingers at sewing cambric and plying their tambouring. The old instruments of the mothers or grandmothers, viol and virginal, remained as lumber in the garrets, and they played on the harpsichord and spinet, to which they sang their plaintive Jacobite songs and made their audience weep in sentiment over Prince Charlie, who was busy drinking himself to death at Rome. But after the pianoforte was introduced into England in 1767, that instrument took the place of the dear old jingling wires of the spinet, from which the nimble reels and strathspeys had come with infinite spirit to stir feet to merry measure at the unceremonious gatherings in many a country house, when, after the dance was over, half a dozen damsels would sleep together in some small bedroom, and the men in dishevelment were content to pass the night in a barn or stable loft. Now spinet and harpsichord were sold at roups for a few shillings to tradesmen and farmers for their daughters to practise on, or to act as sideboards. Now to the piano were sung other songs—those which, united to delightful airs, came with a rush of feminine lyric genius from Lady Anne Lindsay, Miss Elliot, Mrs. Cockburn, and Mrs. Hunter—the two "sets" of "Flowers of the Forest," "Auld Robin Gray," "My mother bids me bind my hair," which charmed the tea-parties when the century was old. From the society balls the minuet had gone with the primmer public manners of the past, and the reel and country dance had become popular to suit a freer age.

Observers of manners and lovers of the past were noticing and deploring the rise of new and livelier ways. Of old there had been amid woman-kind a dignity and stateliness in deportment, begotten of the severe discipline of the nursery, the rigour of the home, and precision of those gentlewomen of high

[1] At the end of the century Italian was often made one of the items of young ladies' accomplishments. About 1775 the young ladies of Gask were taught by a governess, who was hired at a salary of from 10 to 12 guineas a year to impart the practice of "ye needle, principles of religion and loyalty, a good carriage, and talking tolerable good English."—Tytler's *Songstresses of Scotland*, ii. 115.

birth who taught in high flats all feminine accomplishments. If they snuffed it was with formality; if they spoke broad Scots it was without vulgarity; if they said things—and they did say them—that sounded improper to a new generation, their behaviour was a model of propriety, for they had been reared sternly.[1] By 1780, when these ladies had become frail and wrinkled and old, the austerity of home training, the aloofness of parent and children, so painfully characteristic of former days in Scotland,[2] had passed off, to the regret of many old-fashioned folk. Dr. Gregory, an admirable physician, and without doubt an admirable father, spoke of these changes with sorrow: "Every one who can remember a few years back will be sensible of a very striking change in the attention and respect formerly paid by gentlemen to ladies. Their drawing-rooms are deserted, and after dinner the gentlemen are impatient till they retire. The behaviour of ladies in the last age was reserved and stately; it would now be considered ridiculously stiff and formal. It certainly had the effect of making them respected."[3] Probably to many to-day the social ease, whose advent was so lamented, would seem after all stiff as starch and buckram.

[1] On the tastes and topics of ladies, about 1750, see letters concerning horse-breeding by a lady of rank in Dunbar's *Social Life of Morayshire*. Speaking of ladies previous to 1730, Miss Mure says: "The ladies were indelicate and vulgar in their manners, and even after '45 they did not change much and were indelicate in married ones." — *Caldwell Papers*, i. 262. She speaks of young ladies in the boisterous merriment of a marriage or christening getting "intoxicated"; but perhaps there was a milder Scots meaning in the word, for we find James Boswell with subtle refinement explaining to his friend Temple, "I did not get drunk. I was, however, intoxicated."—*Letters of Boswell*, p. 209.

[2] *Lives of the Lindsays*, ii. 304; Dennistoun's *Life of Sir R. Strange;* Lady Minto's *Life of Sir Gilbert Elliot*, i. 15; Fergusson's *Henry Erskine*, p. 62. Miss Violet MacShake in Miss Ferrier's *Marriage* expresses these old family relationships in a forcible way, strikingly like that of Miss Mure of Caldwell (*Caldwell Papers*, i. 260): "I' my grandfather's time, as I have heard him tell, ilka maister o' a faamily had his ain sate in his ain hoose; aye, an' sat wi' his hat on his heed afore the best o' the land; an' had his ain dish an' wus aye helpit first an' keepit up his authority as a man should do. Paurents were paurents then—bairns daurdna' set up their gabs afore them as they dae noo."—ii. 126 (1818). For strangely reserved terms between Joanna Baillie's parents and their family, see Tytler and Watson's *Songstresses of Scotland*, ii. p. 183.

[3] *A Father's Legacy to his Daughter*, 1774.

Whether the old days were better than the new may be a matter of doubt. Englishmen found Scots ladies charmingly frank and natural, and more intelligible than their elders, as they gave up broad Scots words and retained only the Scots cadence;[1] but certainly the former school of gentlewomen was far more picturesque and more quaint, more interesting to look at and more entertaining to listen to. They might be poor—they usually were; they might as dowagers live, like Lady Lovat, in a small flat on £140 a year, and be able, like that high-born and high-residenced dame, to put only a penny or half-penny in the "brod" on Sabbath when they went to the fashionable Tron Kirk of Edinburgh; they might go out in pattens and bargain in emphatic vernacular over a fishwife's creel at the "stair foot," and be lighted home with a lantern to the "close mouth" when the tea-party was over, to save sixpence for a sedan-chair; but in city and jointure houses in country towns, with their tea and card parties, they wondrously maintained their dignity. They spoke of things with blandness on which a reticent age keeps silence; they read and spoke freely of *Tom Jones* and Aphra Behn's plays, which the young generation would have shut with a slam of disapproval, or hid under the sofa cushion when a visitor came in;[2] they punctuated their caustic sayings with a big pinch of snuff,

[1] The Scots tongue was no longer heard in its purity and its breadth from the lips of the younger people in 1774. Speaking of this date, Dr. Johnson writes: "The conversation of the Scots grows every day less displeasing to the English ear. Their peculiarities wear fast away; their dialect is likely to become in half a century provincial and rustic even to themselves. The great, the learned, the ambitious, and the vain all cultivate the English phrases and the English pronunciation. In splendid companies Scots is not much heard, except now and then from an old lady."—*Journey to the Western Islands*, 1791. It is evident that those who met Dr. Samuel tried to speak their best and not their usual. "Scots literati write English as a foreign language, though Edinburgh society manifest an anxiety to rid themselves of Scots accent."—P. 22. Topham's *Letters*, 1776.

[2] When old Miss Keith of Ravelston got at her request Mrs. Behn's works to read, she returned them with the words: "Take back your bonny Mrs. Behn, and if you will take my advice you will put her in the fire; for I find it impossible to get through the first novel. But is it not an odd thing that I, an old woman of eighty and upwards, sitting alone, feel myself ashamed to read a book which sixty years ago I have heard read aloud for the amusement of large circles consisting of the first and most creditable society in London?"—*Life of Sir W. Scott*, vi. 406.

and sometimes confirmed them with a rattling oath.[1] But, for all, they were as upright as they were downright; their manners were stiff as their stomachers, and their morals as erect as their figures, which they kept bolt upright without touching the backs of the chairs—for so they had been disciplined under the tuition of the Honourable Mrs. Ogilvie, that sister-in-law of Lord Seafield whose boarding-school was the pink of feminine perfection.

Changing times were affecting the men also; the uncouthness and provincialism were disappearing from their manners, their attire, and their speech; but some habits of the past were becoming, as in English society, worse instead of wiser. Drinking had always been a favourite occupation. At dinners, public and private, solemn and genial, at christenings, weddings, and funerals, they drank with equal vigour and perfect impartiality. When the chief beverage was ale the effects were not so disastrous or so lasting; when dinners were at one o'clock or two, the drinking could not be prolonged, for the business of the afternoon hindered protracted sittings. But when dinner hours advanced to three or four o'clock, and they took claret, and still worse when all drank port, the parties continued at the board till late at night, in genial company, and he was reckoned a poor host indeed who allowed his friends to leave the dining-room sober. In these circles the wine was seldom placed on the table at dinner, but required each time to be called for, and then it was drunk with the formula of each gentleman asking another to drink with him. This was the invariable process gone through: there was the glance across the table to a friend, the pantomimic lifting of the glass, the inviting words, "A glass of wine with you, sir?" and congenially they drank each other's health. Such was the custom in good society, though not in the very highest life.

[1] Of the vigour of speech with which genuine ladies of old times expressed themselves, many stories are told; see above, p. 29.—Dennistoun's *Life of Sir R. Strange*, ii. 213. A dame of distinguished family of that period when driving home one night was awakened by the carriage being stopped by the coachman, who told her he had seen "a fa'in' star." "And what hae ye to do wi' the stars I wad like to ken?" said his mistress. "Drive on this moment and be damned to you"—adding in a lower tone, as was her wont, "as Sir John wad ha' said if he had been alive, honest man."—Stirling-Maxwell's *Miscellaneous Essays*, 1891, p. 160.

When the table was cleared of viands, and the glasses once more were set on the shining mahogany, each person proposed the health of every other person present severally, and thus if there were ten guests there were ninety healths drunk, with serious consequences to the health of all. There were also rounds of toasts, each gentleman naming an absent lady, each lady an absent gentleman. Next followed "sentiments," as another excuse for further imbibing. Each person was called on in turn to propose a wish called a "sentiment"—it might be some crisp sentence, a poetic phrase, a jovial proverb, or, as generally, a fatuous moral reflection. Each guest proposed such a fine utterance as "May the hand of charity wipe the tears of sorrow," "May the pleasures of the night bear the reflection of the morning," or, in homely vernacular, the sentiment might be, "May waur ne'er be amang us," "May the wind of adversity ne'er blaw open our door," and then followed applause and a drink. Practised diners-out had their own invariable sentences, which were loyally reserved to them as a favourite song to a singer. As every one must take part in the round of sentiments—the youngest, the shyest, the least inventive—it was an agonising ordeal to many. After the ladies had left the room the conviviality, with jest and story and song, began with renewed vigour; so that gentlemen did not join the ladies, not being producible in the drawing-room.[1] That in these days and nights of hard potations country guests found their way home through pitch-dark rugged roads, shows that the horses were more rational than their riders. Fortunately, by the end of the century society became more sensible and less noisy. The deplorably idiotic custom of "sentiment-giving" was given up, to the intense relief of old and young, and incessant toasts were only lingering in the practice of stupid old-fashioned veterans in geniality. The hard drinking considerably sobered down in Scotland as in England, and the most arduous feats of a bibulous generation had become memories, leaving, however, their most vivid traces in features, as of Henry Dundas, "tinged with convivial purple."

[1] Ramsay's *Reminiscences*, 1863, pp. 67-72; Cockburn's *Memorials of his Times*, p. 35; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1766; Fergusson's *Henry Erskine and his Times*, p. 213; Strang's *Clubs of Glasgow*.

In spite of the lapse of time and disappearance of many old homely traits of living, to the end there were many quaint aspects of the past in Scots country life. The pedlars still came round with their packs, though no longer had the lady any yarn of her own spinning to exchange for webs of linen; the survivors of the old gaberlunzies, clad in their blue gowns, called still with wallets over their shoulders to receive meat and meal at the door, and retail gossip and stories in the kitchen. There was a kindly attachment of domestics who served for small wages, and, achieving longevity, passed down as heirlooms in a family through two generations, living and dying as the familiar and garrulous tyrants of a household.

Scottish—ineffaceably Scottish—remained many types of society, especially in the country houses and manses, in spite of the advent of modern innovations, and that frequent intercourse with the wider world which was fast polishing the race into conventional shape. In no other country, surely, did there exist such marked individuality of character. Each one might retain his or her peculiarity, his or her whim of mind, oddity of life, or fancy of dress, in country seat or city flat. This striking originality of nature was found alike in judge and laird and minister, and in their spouses. The country swarmed with "originals" in every rank, in town and village. One can see what special personality there was as we look at sketches, which seem to us caricatures, of Edinburgh notables, etched by John Kay the barber so cleverly, which, any time after 1783, when stuck up in his little shop window in Parliament Square, attracted in the morning groups of citizens, who recognised with laughter some well-known local figure with each peculiarity emphasised, and pronounced every quaint likeness "capital"—except their own. One meets with these distinct characteristics in those ladies and gentlemen of the decline of the century who live in Lord Cockburn's charming pages. One notes them in the portraits and the stories of the bench of judges—a veritable menagerie of oddities, chokeful of whims, absurdities, and strange idiosyncrasies, and of queer humour, conscious or unconscious, in dignitaries without dignity. Where else could attain to high position and exist in sedate and sensible company a Braxfield,

a Polkemmet, an Eskgrove, and a Hermand? The old race, with their old-world ways, which was at last leaving the earth, luckily survived long enough to be portrayed by the master touch of Sir Henry Raeburn, from whose canvasses so many faces with distinctively Scots features and qualities—gentlemen in their high collars, ruffled shirts, and powdered hair or wigs, and dames in old picturesque attire of a bygone day—look down from the walls of many mansions upon a later and a conventional generation. It is difficult to say which was more fortunate—the sitters who had such a superb artist to paint them, or the artist who had such admirable figures to copy.

CHAPTER III

TOWN LIFE—EDINBURGH

I

THE height of Edinburgh's glory was before the Union of 1707, in the days when meetings of the Scots Parliament drew to the capital nobles and persons of quality from every county, when periodically the city was full of the richest, most notable, and best-bred people in the land, and the dingy High Street and Canongate were brightened by gentlemen in their brave attire, by ladies rustling in their hoops, brocade dresses, and brilliant coloured plaids, by big coaches gorgeous in their gilding, and lackeys splendid in their livery. For the capital of a miserably poor country, Edinburgh had then a wonderful display of wealth and fashion. After 1707 all this was sadly changed. "There is the end of an auld sang," said Lord Chancellor Seafield in jest, whether light or bitter, when the Treaty of Union was concluded; but it was a "song" that lingered long in the hearts of those who knew it well, associated with a long eventful history, and leaving many regretful memories behind it. No more was the full concourse of men and ladies of high degree to make society brilliant with the chatter of right honourable voices, the glint of bright eyes from behind the masks, the jostling of innumerable sedan-chairs in the busy thoroughfare, where nobles and caddies, judges and beggars, forced their way with equal persistency. Instead of the throng of 145 nobles and 160 commoners, who often with their families and attendants filled the town with life and business, there went to Westminster the sixteen

representative peers and sixty members of Parliament, travelling reluctantly and tediously and expensively by the wretched roads, and lodging in London at ruinous charges—and all for what? To find themselves obscure and unhonoured in the crowd of English society and the unfamiliar intrigues of English politics, where they were despised for their poverty, ridiculed for their speech, sneered at for their manners, and ignored in spite of their votes by the Ministers and Government.[1]

No wonder the Union was specially unpopular in Edinburgh, for it deprived the city of national dignity, carried from citizens their fashions, and spoiled their trade. A gloom fell over the Scots capital: society was dull, business was duller still,[2] the lodgings once filled with persons of quality were left empty—many decayed for want of tenants, some fell almost into ruin.[3] For half a century there was little social life, scanty intellectual culture, and few traces of business enterprise. Gaiety and amusement were indulged in only under the censure of the Church and the depressing air of that gloomy piety which held undisputed and fuller sway when the influence of rank and fashion no longer existed to counteract it.

[1] "It was one of the melancholyist sights to any that have any sense of an antient nobility to see them going throu for votes and making partys, and giving their votes to others who once had their own vote."—Wodrow's *Analecta*, i. 308. "In the beginning of this month [September 1711] I hear a generall dissatisfaction our nobility that was at last Parliament have at their treatment at London. They complean they are only made use of as tools among the English, and cast by when their party designs are over."—*Ibid.* i. 348. In great dudgeon in 1712 the Scots members met together and expressed "high resentment of the uncivil haughty treatment they met with from the English."—Lockhart's *Papers*, i. 417. Principal Robertson remarked to Dr. Somerville, "'Our members suffered immediately after the Union. The want of the English language and their uncouth manners were much against them. None of them were men of parts, and they never opened their lips but on Scottish business, and then said little.' Lord Onslow (formerly Speaker) said to him, 'Dr. Robertson, they were odd-looking dull men. I remember them well.'"—Somerville's *Own Life and Times*, p. 271.

[2] Allan Ramsay's *Poems*, 1877, i. 169. This desolation is deplored in 1717:—

> O Canongate, poor elritch hole!
> What loss, what crosses dost thou thole,
> London and death gar thee look droll,
> And hing thy head.
> "Elegy on Lucky Wood."

[3] Maitland's *Hist. of Edinburgh*, 1756.

The town, all enclosed within the city walls, chiefly consisted of one long street—Canongate and High Street—that stretched a mile long from Holyrood to Castle, with the low-lying parallel Cowgate. From this main thoroughfare branched off innumerable closes and wynds, in which lived a dense population, gentle and simple.[1] There was something impressive in the houses towering to ten to twelve stories in height of that extended street, though its continuity was then broken midway by the Netherbow Port—the Temple Bar of Edinburgh—with its huge iron gateway. There was picturesqueness in the houses, whose wooden-faced gables were turned to the streets, the projecting upper story making piazzas below. But the few visitors from England were impressed far more by its dirt and dinginess than by its quaint beauty, by the streets which were filthy, the causeways rugged and broken, the big gurgling gutters in which ran the refuse of a crowded population, and among which the pigs poked their snouts in grunting satisfaction for garbage. By ten o'clock each night the filth collected in each household was poured from the high windows, and fell in malodorous plash upon the pavement, and not seldom on unwary passers-by. At the warning call of "Gardy loo" (*Gardez l'eau*) from servants preparing to outpour the contents of stoups, pots, and cans, the passengers beneath would agonisingly cry out "Haud yer hand"; but too often the shout was unheard or too late, and a drenched periwig and besmirched three-cornered hat were borne dripping and ill-scented home. At the dreaded hour when the domestic abominations were flung out, when the smells (known as the "flowers of Edinburgh") filled the air, the citizens burnt their sheets of brown paper[2] to neutralise the odours of the outside, which penetrated their rooms within. On the ground all night the dirt and ordure lay awaiting the few and leisurely scavengers, who came nominally at seven o'clock next morning with wheel-barrows to remove it. But ere that

[1] Contemporary descriptions of Edinburgh in the first half of the century:—*Journey through North of England and Scotland in* 1704, privately printed 1818; Macky's *Journey through Scotland*, 1729; *Tour through Great Britain* (begun by Defoe), iv. 88; Burt's *Letters from the North*, i. 18.

[2] Dealers in brown paper are said to have made no little profit by selling that article for deodorising purposes.—Kay's *Edinburgh Portraits*, ii. 4.

morning hour the streets were becoming thronged, for people rose and business began early, and the shopkeepers, treading cautiously amid the filth and over the teeming gutters, had set forth to open their booths. Worst of all was the Sunday, when strict piety forbade all work, deeming that street-cleansing was neither an act of necessity nor one of mercy, and required the dirt to remain till Monday morning.

While high overhead towered the houses in the air, many in the Lawnmarket had pillared piazzas on the ground floor, under which were the open booths where merchants showed their wares. Others spread them on the pavement in front of their shops, and in the middle of the street near St. Giles were open spaces, where on stalls the special crafts displayed their goods—woollen stuffs, linen, or pots—for the shops were too small and too obscure to accommodate or show off the modest stores their owners possessed. In the second or third flat of the Luckenbooths—a row of tall narrow houses standing in front of St. Giles and blocking the High Street—the best tradesmen had their shops, at a rental of which the very highest rate was £15,[1] and not a few of these shopkeepers, notwithstanding their humble rooms and slender stock of goods, were members of high Scots county families. Others in good position had their business in cellars or little chambers on the basement, to which the customers descended by worn stone steps, and in which there was little space to turn and little light to see by. High up in front of the houses were the strange signs, painted in colours on black ground, each tradesman picturing thereon the article in which he chiefly dealt—the effigy of a quarter loaf showed that in that flat there traded a baker; over the window above a periwig advertised the presence of a barber; the likeness of a cheese or firkin of butter, of stays, or of a petticoat, pointed out to the people where were to be got the articles they sought.[2] Few goods were kept in stock, and the customer for silk, cloth, or jewellery must give his order betimes, and patiently wait

[1] Chambers' *Traditions of Edinburgh*, ii. 352; Wilson's *Memorials of Edinburgh.*

[2] Topham's *Letters from Edinburgh*, p. 28.

till it came its slow course from London by waggon, or from Holland or Flanders by the boat to Leith three months afterwards.

In the flats of the lofty houses in wynds or facing the High Street the populace dwelt, who reached their various lodgings by the steep and narrow "scale" staircases, which were really upright streets. On the same building lived families of all grades and classes, each in their flats in the same stair—the sweep and caddie in the cellars, poor mechanics in the garrets, while in the intermediate stories might live a noble, a lord of session, a doctor, or city minister, a dowager countess, or writer; higher up, over their heads, lived shopkeepers, dancing masters, or clerks. The rents of these mansions varied curiously in the same close, or same stair, from the cellars and garrets paying £12 Scots (18s.) to the best-class chambers paying £300 Scots (£20). But the common rent of a gentleman's dwelling in the first half of the century was £8 or £10 a year. Lord President Dundas used to say that even when his income was 20,000 merks (£1000), he lived in a house at £100 Scots (£8 : 6 : 8) and had only two roasts a week.[1] But living was then plain, for incomes were small; a minister in his city charge in the middle of the century and a professor in the University was thought well off with £100 or £130 a year, while a lord of session had a salary of £500. The dark, narrow stairs, with their stone steps worn and sloping with traffic, were filthy to tread on; and on reaching the flat where lodged an advocate in extensive practice, eyes and nose encountered at the door the "dirty luggies" in which were deposited the contents which, as St. Giles' bells rang out ten o'clock, were to be precipitated from the windows.[2] On the door, instead of a bell or knocker, was a "risp," which consisted of a notched or twisted rod of iron with a ring attached, which the visitor rasped up and down upon the

[1] Ramsay's *Scotland and Scotsmen*, ii. 28.

[2] *Tour through Great Britain*, iv. 88; *Humphrey Clinker*. The Town Council, in August 1745, "considering that inasmuch as the several Acts on the throwing of foul water, filth, dirt, and other nastiness in the high streets, vennels, and closes had not been put into due execution, direct each family would now provide vessels in the houses for holding their excrements and foul water at least for 48 hours, under penalty of 4s. Scots."

notches till the door was opened by a maidservant, probably with neither shoes nor stockings.[1]

The rooms within were entered from a narrow, ill-lighted lobby, and were low-ceilinged, deriving light from the spare windows which long before sunset had faded into gloom. Sometimes in the public rooms there were signs of dignity and art, in the elaborately stuccoed ceiling, the finely carved massive marble mantelpiece, the walls oak-panelled or covered with gilt leather, with landscape panels from the hand of "old Norrie," the decorator; but usually the rooms were plain and poor, crammed with furniture for which there was no space. The accommodation in a mansion of high class would be six rooms, including the kitchen and the diminutive closet for private devotions, which was commonly found in every house, to allow the master of the household to retire at certain times for pious meditation.[2] Far on in the century in public rooms there were beds, concealed during day by curtains, where company was received, as the accommodation was awkwardly spare.[3] Partly from economy, partly from lack of space, the staff of servants was extremely limited, for often one—and there was no accommodation for more than two—

[1] Chambers' *Traditions*, i. 236. Called a "craw," because it made a rasping noise like a crow.

> Here in these chambers ever dull and dark
> The lady gay received her gayer spark,
> Who, clad in silken coat, with cautious tread
> Trembled at opening casements overhead;
> And when in safety at her porch he trod,
> He seized the risp and rasped the twisted rod.
> "Ancient Royalty," Sir Alex. Boswell's *Poems*.

[2] An oratory was a usual requisite in any well-appointed house.—Chambers' *Ancient Architecture of Edinburgh;* Mrs. Calderwood of Polton's *Journey*.

[3] Lord Alemoor (died 1776) lived in a second flat of Covenant Close, with five rooms and kitchen, yet kept a carriage.—Chambers' *Traditions*, i. 186. Bruce of Kennet, before he rose to the Bench, lived in a flat in Forester's Wynd, Lawnmarket, at a rent of £11, containing three rooms and a kitchen; one room was "my lady's," another a consulting room or study, the third their bedroom, while their maid (who was their only servant except the nurse) slept under the kitchen dresser; their serving man slept out of the house, and the nurse and children had beds in the study, which were removed during the day. In later days Lord Kennet removed (1764) to a house of great gentility of two flats in Horse Wynd.—Chambers' *Minor Antiquities*, Introd. xxx. John Coutts, Lord Provost, had in 1743 his residence, his banking business, and civic feasts in President's Close, High Street, consisting of five rooms.—Forbes' *Memoirs of a Banking House*.

did the work of the household on a wage of 15s. a year and a gown. In the house of a gentleman who luxuriously kept his carriage the servant slept under a dresser in the kitchen, while his man slept over the stable; and in the flat occupied by an eminent judge the maid slept as best she could in a drawer in the kitchen which was shut up during the day.[1] Owing to the scantiness of space, the nurse and children would probably sleep in the study, if such existed, the beds being removed during the day, when the lord of session worked over his charges or the nobleman saw his friends, while the lady in her bedroom was entertaining her guests at tea.[2]

The air in these low rooms was not extremely fresh, especially when it came from those windows which opened into fetid closes or wynds, which were so narrow that the inhabitants could converse easily and exchange friendly cups of tea with their neighbours on the other side. The long precipitous stairs were crowded all day long with men, women, and children belonging to the various flats passing up and down—masons, judges, dancing masters, countesses, barbers, and advocates, all encountered each other in the narrow passage. Besides the residents there was the stream of porters carrying coals, the Musselburgh fishwives with their creels, the sweeps, the men and women conveying the daily supply of water for each flat, barbers' boys with retrimmed wigs, the various people bent on business or on pleasure, on errands and visits for the several landings, all jostling unceremoniously as they squeezed past one another. It was no easy task for brilliantly dressed ladies to crush their hoops, four or five yards in circumference, up the scale-stairs, or to keep them uncontaminated by the dirt abounding on the steps. So confined were some of the stairs that it was sometimes impossible, when death came, to get the coffin down; and when a passage was too narrow for

[1] Nor was the cleanliness of those unsalubrious abodes above suspicion, and it was not uncommon for lodgings to be advertised as possessing the special virtue of being "free from bugs." It is with this recommendation that Lord Kilkerran announces his flat to be let at £20.—Chambers' *Traditions*, ii. 235.

[2] "The fashion of the House in Edinbro' was so small at that time [1697] that there was turned up beds with curtains drawn round them in most of the best rooms of the house."—Warrender's *Marchmont and House of Polwarth*, p. 157.

that purpose, the power was possessed by legal servitude for the tenant of a house so situated to get entry through the adjacent house, and bring the coffin down its more commodious stair.[1]

Curiously uncomfortable and mean as these abodes seem to a more civilised and luxurious age, they were ideal residences to many in that frugal age.[2] So familiar, so natural, was this kind of dwelling in their eyes that the tale was told —truly or not—of a Scottish gentleman who paid his first visit to London, and, taking his lodging in the uppermost story of a house, was surprised to find that the higher he went the cheaper it was. When a friend told him he had made a mistake, he replied that he "kenned very weel what gentility was, and when he had lived a' his life in a sixth story he wasna come to London to live on the grund."[3]

The hours for rising were early in these old times, and the city was astir by five o'clock in the morning. Before the St. Giles' bells had sounded seven the shops were open, the shutters were flung back on their hinges, and over the half-door the tradesmen were leaning, chatting to their neighbours, and receiving the last news; while citizens walked down to the little post-office, situated up a stair, to get the letters just brought in by the post-runner from Glasgow or Aberdeen, instead of waiting till they were distributed through the town by the single letter-carrier of the city, or even the three carriers who were installed in 1717. In the taverns the doctors were seeing their patients. Up till 1713 the celebrated physician, Dr. Archibald Pitcairn, was to be found in the dingy under-

[1] This was done when Sir W. Scott's aunt, Mrs. Rutherfurd, died in Hynd-ford Close.

[2] The accommodation contained in mansions of the highest order can be learned from an advertisement of 1753. "To be let, a very convenient lodging, pleasantly situated amidst gardens on the north side of the Cannongate, belonging to the Right Hon. Lord Panmure, and lately possessed by the Countess of Aberdeen, consisting of a large dining-room, a drawing-room, 3 very good bedrooms with closets, and other conveniences on the same floor; above is very good garrets with vents, and below a very convenient kitchen, cellars, etc., all enclosed within a handsome courtyard."—Chambers' *Minor Antiquities*, p. 252. This dwelling, so flatteringly described, or part of it, was afterwards occupied by Adam Smith, and was more impartially spoken of as a "melancholy, dingy abode."

[3] Topham's *Letters*, p. 11.

ground cellar, called from its darkness the "groping office," near St. Giles'. Early every morning, by six o'clock, President Dalrymple had seen his agent, and gone over a dozen cases before his breakfast. Eight o'clock was the breakfast hour, with its substantial meal of mutton, collops, and fowl, with libations of ale, and sometimes sack, claret, or brandy—tea not being used at that meal till about 1730.[1] The citizen shut his shop, or left his wife to tend it, when the St. Giles' bells rang at half-past eleven—a well-known sound which was known as the "gill-bells," because each went to his favourite tavern to take his "meridian," consisting of a gill of brandy, or a tin of ale. Little these citizens heeded the music-bells, which meanwhile overhead were playing the bright charming tunes to which wiser folk were all listening.[2] The dinner hour was at one o'clock till 1745, when it was being changed to two, though the humbler shopkeepers dined at twelve. The wonted fare in winter was broth, salt beef, boiled fowls; for only the wealthy could afford to get fresh beef at high prices until the summer, when the arrival of any supply of beef for sale was announced in the streets by the bellman.[3]

By two o'clock all citizens wended their way down their respective stairs to their places of business, reopened the doors, and hung up the key on a nail on the lintel[4]—a practice which afforded the notorious burglar, Deacon Brodie, in 1780, opportunities of taking impressions of the keys on putty. By the early afternoon the streets were crowded, for into the main thoroughfare the inhabitants of the city poured. Later in the century an Englishman describes the scene: "So great a crowd

[1] That tea was in vogue about 1720, and was soon established as a fashion, is shown by Allan Ramsay entitling his collection of songs (the first volume of which appeared in 1724) the *Tea Table Miscellany*.

[2] Burt's *Letters* (i. 191) speak of the music bells that played to great perfection—Italian, Scots, Irish, and English tunes heard over all the city between eleven and twelve o'clock.

[3] In winter fresh meat was practically unattainable, although, as a writer in 1729 says, rich and fastidious gentlemen used to send to Berwick for beef or veal, at the enormous rate of 7d. a pound for the coarsest meat (the summer price being 1½d. or 2d. a pound), as there was none to be got at home.—*Essays on Enclosing*, etc., 1729, p. 132. There died in 1799 a caddie or market porter who remembered in his youth when the fact of beef being for sale in Edinburgh was publicly announced by a bellman.—Chambers' *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, p. 76.

[4] Chambers' *Minor Antiquities of Edinburgh*, p. 166.

of people are nowhere else confined in so small a space, which makes their streets as much crowded every day as others are at a fair."[1] There were few coaches, fortunately, in the narrow steep streets; but there were sedan-chairs swaying in all directions, borne by Highland porters, spluttering Gaelic execrations on those who impeded their progress. There were ladies in gigantic hoops sweeping the sides of the causeway, their head and shoulders covered with their gay silken plaids, scarlet and green, their faces with complexions heightened by patches, and concealed by black velvet masks which were held close by a string, whose buttoned end was held by the teeth. In their hands they bore huge green paper fans to ward off the sun; by their side hung the little bags which held the snuff they freely used; their feet shod in red shoes, with heels three inches high, with which they tripped nimbly on the steep decline and over filthy places.[2] There were stately old ladies, with their pattens on feet and canes in hand, walking with precision and dignity; judges with their wigs on head and hats under their arm; advocates in their gowns on way to the courts in Parliament House; ministers in their blue or gray coats, bands, wigs, and three-cornered hats. At the Cross (near St. Giles') the merchants assembled to transact business, and to exchange news and snuff-boxes; while physicians, lawyers, and men about town met them as at an open-air club, and joined citizens in the gossip of the city.[3] In the town there was a fine *camaraderie*—the friendliness and familiarity of a place where every one knew everybody. From early morning, when they awoke on the doorsteps on which they had slept, till night, when they lighted the way in the dark streets with paper lanterns, the caddies were to be seen—impudent, ragged, alert, and swift—carrying messages and parcels to any part of the town for a penny—very poor, but marvellously honest, for whatever was stolen or lost when in custody of these caddies was refunded by their society.[4] They knew every place and

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1766, p. 211.

[2] Somerville's *Own Life*, chap. ix.; Chambers' *Traditions*.

[3] Burt's *Letters;* Forbes' *Memoirs of a Banking House*, p. 26.

[4] Burt's *Letters*, i. 21; Topham's *Letters from Edinburgh*, p. 81; *Humphrey Clinker; Glasgow Past and Present*, ii. 150.

person; they could tell who had arrived last in town, where they lodged, and how long they were to stay; they were invaluable as detectives, for the haunts of the lowest and the doings of the thieves were as familiar to them as the names of the guests at the Lord President's supper party the previous night, and the condition of insobriety of each gentleman when he stumbled home in the morning.

Such were the street scenes in Edinburgh throughout half of the century—indeed, with curiously few changed phases till about 1780, when the tide of fashion was setting towards the new town. Generations came and went, fashions of dress changed, many old habits and manners passed away; but the homely, frank, convivial outdoor life remained much the same,[1] where every face was known, and few domestic secrets were hid.

At four o'clock the ladies had their refection, for the "four hours" all over Scotland, and with all ranks, was a necessary refreshment of the day. In the larger houses the hostess received her visitors in the drawing-room; but in smaller flats she was obliged, as in the country, to see them in her bedroom. Till about 1720 ladies had drunk their ale or claret; but when tea came into vogue that beverage became a necessity, and wine was reserved for the gentlemen. On the mahogany tea-table were liliputian cups for the expensive beverage, with spoons all numbered, lest in the confusion, when every cup was returned before a fresh helping was served to any, the wrong cup should be given; fine linen napkins were handed to each guest to preserve their gowns from speck and spot.[2] By eight o'clock all visitors had gone, for the supper hour had come; the maids had arrived with the pattens for the elderly ladies, and lanterns to light their mistresses to their homes in the dark wynds and stairs. When citizens began their copious suppers, they ate and drank till late, and guests departed not

[1] Mr. Adam Petrie gives his important advice on etiquette: "If a lady of quality advance to you and tender her cheek, you are only to pretend to salute her by putting your head to her hood; when she advances make her a low bow, and when you retreat give her another. *Note.*—In France they salute ladies on the cheek; but in Britain and Ireland they salute on the lips. But ladies give their inferiors their cheek only."—*Rules of Good Deportment*, Edin. 1720.

[2] Boswell' *Ancient Royalty.*

too soberly, while the servant guided their meandering footsteps and held a candle or lantern to light them to the "mouth" of the close.[1]

II

The amusements of the town during the first half of the century were neither varied nor lively. For this dulness and social sombreness the Church and popular piety were responsible. All gaiety was looked on with grim censure. Kirk-Sessions uttered anathemas against all worldly pleasure, exercised tyrannical sway over every day of the week and over every action of the people. Sabbath was the special day when every act and moment of existence were watched; the doing of any work, the indulgence of the slightest recreation, was forbidden; the "vaguing" or loitering in the streets or on the Castle hill, the mere "gazing idlely" out of the windows, was a subject of condemnation and occasion of threats of discipline by Kirk-Sessions, and of fine by magistrates.[2] To secure the perfect observance of the Lord's Day, the bailies had "seizers" or compurgators, appointed at the instance of the Church, who took hold of any one "during sermons" who dared to neglect divine service and forthwith reported him to the general Kirk-Session. In the evening the patrol watched the streets, which usually in these days were deserted like a city of the dead; followed any belated passenger's echoing footsteps, peered down wynds, looked up stairs for any lurking transgressors of the law of Mount Sinai.[3] The "kirk treasurer," appointed by the Session, whose very name was at once a subject of mockery and an object of terror, was ever on the alert for scandals and culprits that brought in fines and fees. The voice of the Church was stern against the barbers who on Sabbath furtively carried the gentlemen's wigs all ready trimmed for worship, or went to shave them into tidiness. This demand for the services of

[1] *Account Books of Foulis of Ravelston*, p. 301, notes in 1703 that Sir John gives "to Marquess of Tweedall's servant that held out ye light in the closs-head when I went to see him," 14s. 6d. Scots as "drink money."

[2] *King's Pious Proclamations*, etc., 1727, p. 17.

[3] Arnot's *History of Edinburgh*, p. 203; Burt's *Letters*, i. 80; Allan Ramsay's *Poems*, i. 158.

barbers made that craft one of the largest and most prosperous in the community; for gentlemen, instead of "barbourising" themselves, to use the expression of the day, were dependent on their servants or their wig-makers to shave their heads. Possibly there were some who acted like Sir John Foulis of Ravelston, who, quite innocent of any sense of humour, ordered his boy to buy a sheep's head and soap that he might thereon learn how to barberise the head of his master.[1]

Every pleasure of the week-day was watched and reprobated as grimly as were all desecrations of the Sabbath—the theatre, dancing, the club. The last was a source of horror to the pious in the early part of the century, as being the scene of hideous orgies, and resort of those who ridiculed the Kirk and the Whigs without any principles on either Church or politics. The names that these re-unions bore—the "Sulphur Club," the "Hell-Fire Club," the "Horn Club," the "Demireps"—had a dare-devil and dare-kirk sound; the free talk of their members, their ribald verses, their blaspheming songs, as wildly rumoured abroad, became the scandal of the town, while the iniquities of the Hell-Fire Club were considered past mention—like the later goings-on at Medmenham Abbey—and as deserving divine judgment. "Lord pity us," moans Mr. Robert Wodrow: "wickedness is come to a terrible height." The words and jests and verses of Dr. Archibald Pitcairn, as malicious gossip related them, at these terrible saturnalia, flouting at religion and even at the ministers, were matters of sore grief.[2]

Theatre there was none for a long while in Edinburgh; but occasionally travelling companies came from England, under the leadership of the famous comedian Tony Ashton, in 1715, and again in 1726, and in successive years—"filling up our cup

[1] *Account Book of Foulis of Ravelston* (Scottish Hist. Society), p. 301. "To Jeamie Gray, to buy a sheap's head and soap to learn him to barberise me, 3s. 6d. (Scots)"; "To a lad who barbarised me, 5s."—such are frequent items in this household book.

[2] "At Edinburgh I hear Dr. Pitcairn and several others do meet regularly every Lord's day and read the Scripture in order to lampoon and ridicule it"—thus writes Wodrow in 1711 (*Analecta*, i. 323). Certainly Pitcairn lampooned the fanatical clergy, while he was an admiring friend of Principal Carstairs. What he thought of them may be seen in his coarse and scurrilous play *The Assembly*.

of sin," groaned the ministers. Horror was felt that some judges and nobles, who were ruling elders in the Church, had been present; and that, notwithstanding the intimation of some clergy that they would refuse the communion to those who frequented this nursery of Satan, the attendance when the *Mourning Bride* was performed had been grievously great.[1] "A vast deal of money in this time of scarcity is spent most wickedly," records Wodrow, "especially as there is such a choak for money." One has more sympathy with those who condemned the less edifying plays of Congreve than this utterly respectable and lugubrious tragedy from a witty and lively pen. Fortunately, even the broadest pieces of Wycherley were almost harmless, as they were listened to by feminine ears far too unsophisticated to catch the gross innuendo uttered in high London accents which they could not understand.[2]

In 1736 Allan Ramsay was anxious to add to his many occupations of ex-wigmaker, poet, and librarian, that of theatre-manager, and built a play-house in Carrubber's Close, which was opened only to be summarily shut under the influence of clergy and magistrates.[3] In vain the versatile little citizen brought his complaint for loss of money before the Court of Session: he got only the subtle verdict that, "though he had been damaged, he had not been injured." The career of the drama in Edinburgh was precarious and chequered. Denounced by the ministers, discouraged by the magistrates, the theatre received no license. But, evasive of the law, plays were performed in the Taylors' Hall, and, to escape the legal penalty,

[1] "I am informed," writes Wodrow in 1731, "that the English strollers are [*sic*] a prodigiouse sumn of money in the town of Edinburgh. It's incredible what number of chairs with men are carryed to these places, and it is certain that for some weeks they made fifty pound sterling every night, and they will be coming home from them even of the Saturnday evenings at one of the morning. This is a most scandalouse way of disposing of our money when we are in such a choak for money; and it's a dreadfull corruption of our youth and ane ilett (eyelet) to prodigality and vanity and the money spent in cloaths for attending."—*Analecta*, iv. 214.

[2] A young lady from the country who had been to the theatre when the *Old Bachelor* and *Love for Love* were played, when told that "these were not proper plays for young women," replied, "They *did* nothing wrong that I saw, and as for what they *said* it was high English and I couldn't understand it."—Ramsay's *Scotland and Scotsmen*, ii. 63.

[3] Wilson's *Memorials*, i. 198.

were advertised as being given "gratis" after a concert.[1] The entertainment was announced as "a concert of musick with a play between the acts," and the prudest might go and enjoy Vanbrugh's *Provoked Husband* and Wycherley's unsavoury *Country Wife* under guise of innocently listening to Corelli's sonatas. It was in 1756 that the town was delighted and the Church horrified by the performance of the tragedy of *Douglas* from the pen of Mr. John Home, minister of Athelstaneford, given in the presence of several brother ministers of the Gospel.[2] The Edinburgh Presbytery drew up its exhortation that "all within its bounds discourage the illegal and dangerous entertainments of the stage, and restrain those under their influence from frequenting such seminaries of vice and folly." Other Presbyteries censured or suspended ministers for their profane audacity in attending such improper places, and the delinquents received their rebukes solemnly in public and laughed at them heartily in private. Meanwhile Home quietly resigned his living to escape deposition, and allowed the Church to fume at a play so immoral and irreligious, which, it was alleged, encouraged suicide, and contained impious expressions and mock prayers, and even "horrid swearing."[3] But in spite of all solemn reprobation society raved over its marvellous beauties, and at the tea-parties ladies recited the opening soliloquy to entranced companies—

> And you fair dames of merry England,
> As fast your tears did flow.

In spite of all the excitement of the godly, the very fact that ministers and elders dared to countenance a stage play showed

[1] Arnot's *History of Edinburgh*, p. 364 ; Jackson's *History of Scottish Stage*, p. 31. *Caledonian Mercury*, December 13, 1750, advertises—"At the Concert Hall in the Cannongate, to-morrow, will be performed (*gratis*) the TRAGICAL HISTORY OF RICHARD III., containing the distresses and death of K. Henry VI. of Gloucester, the murder of the Princes in the Tower, the memorable battle of Bosworth field, with many more historical Passages . . . to which will be added (*gratis*) a Pantomime entertainment in grotesque characters called MERLIN or the BRITISH ENCHANTER, etc."

[2] Carlyle's *Autobiography;* Somerville's *Own Life and Times;* Mackenzie's *Life and Writings of John Home; Scots Magazine*, xix. p. 18.

[3] Arnot's *History of Edinburgh*, p. 377. The oath that was reprobated was "by Him that died upon the accursed tree."

that the old bigotry was beginning to lose its hold. The people thronged the play-house till the Church in despair ceased to fulminate at the pit of a theatre as leading to the pit that is bottomless, and at last, in 1764, a theatre was licensed and set up on a field which had been the scene of Whitfield's fervid religious meetings.

Gentlemen had their other amusements on which, fortunately, the religious world laid no embargo. They had their golf, their archery, their horse-races on Leith sands—which the most scrupulous magistrates did not hesitate to encourage by presenting cups as prizes.[1] There were also the less praiseworthy cock-pits resorted to by high and low, all eagerly watching their "mains," an amusement which had no very elevating effect on the youth and leisured men about town. Strange to say, the clergy who were ready to denounce all carnal pleasure, even in the decorous form of a minuet, uttered no complaint against the coarse and demoralising sport of cock-fighting. Why this ecclesiastical reticence? Obviously because every one had been accustomed to that sport in every parish school. Every minister in his boyish days had himself indulged in it, when on Fastern Eve or Shrove Tuesday he had proudly brought his own favourite cock under his arm to pit against those of his schoolmates, while the master looked on and annexed the corpses of the slaughtered fowls to replenish his scanty table.

Other entertainments were regarded less leniently. When in 1725 the enterprising little Allan Ramsay opened a circulating library[2]—the first ever formed in the kingdom—in the first floor of a "land" in the Luckenbooths, the arrival and circulation of profane books from London was regarded with opprobrium. Not content with the pious literature of their fathers, the citizens now revelled in ungodly plays, poems, and scurrilous pamphlets. Again Mr. Wodrow uttered, in his jeremiads, the feelings of his party, lamenting that "profaneness is come to a great height; all the villanous, profane, and obscene books and plays printed at London by Curle and others are got down by Allan Ramsay and lent out for an

[1] Arnot's *History of Edinburgh*, p. 363.

[2] The second circulating library was founded in London in 1740.

easy price to young boys, servant girls of the better sort, and gentlemen, and vice and obscenity are dreadfully propagated."[1] Instigated by that virtuous censor of morals, Lord Grange, the magistrates sent some of their number to inspect the pernicious shelves; but, forewarned, the wily librarian kept out of sight the worst of his stock, and the civic detectives saw only an array of decorous works before them.

III

In the dearth of public pleasures, the worldly energies of society found expression in concerts and dancing assemblies. The private houses were far too small to allow of dancing-parties. There was not space enough for a country dance or minuet, no place wherein to pile up the superabundant furniture, no room for guests to sit, or refreshments to be eaten, or be-hooped ladies to move. Late in the century, when dresses were of more moderate dimensions, the amiable old lady, Mrs. Cockburn, singer of the "Flowers of the Forest," did for the nonce have a dance for young folk in her flat in Blair Close. There in her straitened quarters twenty-two guests assembled, "nine couples on the floor." "Our fiddlers," she writes to her friend, "sat where the cupboard is, and they danced in both rooms; the table was stuffed into the window, and we had plenty of room. It made the bairns all vastly happy."[2]

Few, however, had the ingenuity or good-nature of this old gentlewoman: so from 1710, when the first assembly was opened, it was at public balls that society met.[3] The pulpits rang with denunciations of this seductive temptation to sin, lust, and worldliness; "promiscuous dancing" was condemned as an incentive to sensuality, and these rooms were pictured as nurseries of vice. But, in spite of all, society danced, and dancing-masters drove as flourishing a business as the barbers. These dancing teachers gave their own balls, in bigger rooms of a wynd. Tickets cost 2s. 6d.; dancing began at five o'clock and went on till ten or eleven. There was also the

[1] Wodrow's *Analecta*, iii. 515.
[2] Tytler and Watson's *Songstresses of Scotland*, i. p. 110.
[3] Wilson's *Memorials*, ii. 23.

assembly in the West Bow, in a flat facing the grim and haunted lodging of the wizard Major Weir; and in the narrow lane, from four o'clock,[1] there was a crowd of sedan-chairs with their gaily attired occupants, the noisy mob pressing to witness the fine sight, the objurgations in safe Gaelic of competing chairmen, the clanking of the swords of gentlemen in bright silken coats. Up the winding turnpike stair to a flat ladies ascended, holding up their hoops to gain difficult entrance by the narrow passage. For these articles of raiment were enormous and capacious, as young Robert Strange the Jacobite engraver found, when beneath the hoop of his betrothed, the vigorous-minded Isabella Lumsden, he sought concealment from his pursuers, while she sat quietly spinning in seeming innocence before the baffled searchers.

In this poor incommodious room, and after 1720, in the Assembly Close, off the High Street,[2] the dancing revels took place, while the ministers uttered their solemn, ineffectual warning. Under the patronage of ladies of high degree, such as my Lady Panmure, or beautiful Susanna, Countess of Eglinton, the minuet and the country dance went on with stiffness and with state in the low-roofed, hot, ill-ventilated room to the meagre music of a few fiddlers. By eleven o'clock the company dispersed, the stream of fashion poured down the dark stair, and then, as the Countess of Eglinton, lovely herself, and her seven lovely daughters were borne off in their sedan-chairs, the gentlemen with drawn swords escorted them to their lodgings in Jack's Land.

Years passed on; new leaders of fashion came as the old departed. In the middle of the century, as the companies arrived up the stairs to the ballroom, at the entrance stood

[1] Burt's *Letters*, i. 186; Arnot's *Hist. of Edinburgh;* Chambers' *Traditions;* Ramsay's *Poems*, "The Assembly"; Wilson's *Reminiscences of Old Edinburgh*, i. 307; Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker;* Wilson's *Memorials*, i. 199; Topham's *Letters*, p. 198.

[2] "They have an assembley at Edinburgh, where every Thursday they meet and dance from four till eleven at night. It is half-a-crown, and whatever tea, coffee, chocalate, biscuit, etc., they call for, they must pay as the managers direct; and they are the Countess of Panmure, Lady Newhall, the President's lady, and the Lady Drumpellier. The ministers are preaching against it, and say it will be another horning order." So in 1727 Miss A. Stewart writes to Mrs. Dunbar in *Social Life of Morayshire*, 118.

the old glover, Lord Kirkcudbright, selling white gloves to the dancers as they entered.[1] At the end of the room sat the majestic figure of Miss Nicky Murray (sister of Lord Mansfield), decorated with a gold medal as insignia of her office as Lady Directress, in which capacity she exercised undisputed sway.

Each partner had been chosen by the gentlemen before the ball, the selection being made at some private party, when all the fans were placed in a cocked hat, and the owner of fan picked out became the partner for the night—each having a shrewd guess who was the fair owner of the fan he took.[2] The tickets were then bought by the gentleman, who sometimes had one or two oranges stowed away in his coat pocket for the refreshment of his lady, who sucked them during pauses of conversation and intervals in the dance—a succulent process which she varied by presenting to her nose delicate pinches of snuff, which she extracted from the dainty snuff-box hanging by her side.[3] The customary price for the ticket was two shillings and sixpence, not defraying the modest expenses of tea and coffee which were consumed in the card-room, and the proceeds of the ball were devoted to charity—especially to the new Royal Infirmary, which was enlisting popular interest.

Oliver Goldsmith, in 1753, then a poor student at college, one evening spent one of his few half-crowns—probably borrowed—to attend this fashionable gathering, which he describes as deplorably dull.[4] "When the stranger enters the dancing-room he sees one end of the room taken up by ladies, who sit dismally in a group by themselves, and at the other end stand their pensive partners that are to be. The ladies may ogle and the gentlemen may sigh, but an embargo is laid upon any close converse. At length the lady directress pitches

[1] Chambers' *Traditions of Edinburgh*, ii. 108. At the election of peers for House of Lords his lordship claimed his right to vote, and at the ball which closed the ceremonial the old glover joined his brother peers. The title was legally confirmed to his son.—Wilson's *Old Edinburgh*, i. 70.

[2] Boswell's *Ancient Royalty*.

[3] Fergusson's *Henry Erskine and his Times*, p. 119.

[4] Letter from Goldsmith in Forster's *Life and Times of O. Goldsmith*, i. pp. 52, 433.

upon a gentleman and lady to a minuet, which they perform with a formality approaching to despondency. After five or six couples have thus walked the gauntlet, all stand for the country dance, each gentleman furnished with a partner from the aforesaid lady directress. So they dance much and say nothing, and this concludes an assembly." Thus graphically, if not without exaggeration, Oliver tells his experiences. But a very ugly youth, with no attractions to speak of, and with no friends to speak to and no lady to dance with, even though he was clad, according to the tailor's ledger still extant, in a suit of "sky bleu sattin, rich black genoa velvett, best superfine clarett coloured cloth," was not likely to enjoy himself heartily at a gathering which was so exclusive that any man who ventured therein without the passport of position or birth was shown by the aristocratic Miss Nicky that his appearance was at least a surprise. Neither in that room, nor in the larger apartment to which dancers adjourned in 1756 in Bell's Wynd, was dignity dissociated from discomfort at these balls; from the draughty stair-case came the cold air, the smoke of the flambeaux of footmen stationed at the entry, and the rooms were crowded on occasions when a supper was laid in one dancing apartment.[1] As the St. Giles' bells sounded eleven, the despotic Miss Nicky with firm dignity waved her fan, the music ceased, the concourse dispersed, the gentlemen saw their partners home to their flats, and thereafter adjourned to some tavern to drink and each to toast the lady of his choice. Each man proposed his own as the loveliest of her sex, drank to her glory, vowing to die in her defence, the one who drank most and fell prone last being the victor. Thus one after another followed in tipsy folly the barbarous custom called "saving the ladies," till the chivalrous party became helplessly drunk.[2]

With all their inconveniences and social crudities, in spite of the shabbiness and discomfort of these entertainments, at which modern nerves shudder, they were the charm of Edinburgh fashion, and lived long in the memories of old people, who remembered the bright days when they were young.

[1] Arnot's *Hist. of Edin.* p. 382.

[2] This rough custom had died out by 1790. Creech's *Fugitive Pieces*, p. 68.

Alas! these rooms—sources of so much mirth and matrimony —were deserted when Miss Nicky Murray ceased to reign. Elderly ladies and gentlemen saw the old festive rooms fallen to low estate, and the town sweeps and decrepit city guard tenanting and profaning the dear old rooms.[1] In 1777 the assemblies forsook the old High Street, and met in George Street in the new town, whither the tide of fashion was beginning to flow.

There was another aspect of ancient Edinburgh society, which presents the fairer and more refined conditions of a life which had much that was coarse in manners and uncultivated in tone. Music was one of the favourite tastes of fashionable circles, especially when played by the distinguished amateurs of society.[2] In a tavern—the "Cross Keys"—ladies and gentlemen from 1718 met in the afternoons to hear their musical friends, who gave "consorts," at which the best Italian sonatas were played on flute, hautbois, violoncello, and harpsichord. Artistic noblemen and lairds who had travelled to the melodious south brought the pieces which they (aided by professional musicians) performed to an enthusiastic throng of beauties, who went into raptures as my Lords Colvil and Haddington sat down to the harpsichord or the 'cello. When these grew old, others took their place in seat and platform in St. Cecilia's Hall in the dingy, dirty Cowgate. The songs of the country, too, were not neglected either at these public reunions or at tea-parties in the flats, to which the sedan-chairs bore their be-hooped, be-powdered occupants, where they partook of fare as simple as the airs they sang. Without accompaniment, each vocalist in turn sang those songs—now plaintive, now merry, sad, humorous, or lilting—and many a party was moved to tears at charming strains which told of the artificial woes of a Strephon or Chloe, or the humbler griefs and loves of a Maggie or Jenny, redolent of the byre.[3] Cards lost their attraction to silk-coated beaux when Scots melodies, old and yet ever fresh, were poured

[1] Kay's *Edinburgh Portraits*, 1877, ii. 156.

[2] Chambers' *Domestic Annals*, iii. 434.

[3] Chambers' *Scottish Songs*, Introd. vol. i. p. 58; Allan Cunningham's *Scottish Songs*, 1818, Introd. vol. i.

forth. It was to suit this taste that Allan Ramsay published in 1724 his *Tea-Table Miscellany*,[1] in which the familiar tunes were retained to familiar words, or set to verses which were made more clean to satisfy a more modest age. But in truth, though he had lengthened the skirts of the "high-kilted muse" to fit her for the drawing-room, he had not done enough; and it shows that the period was one which allowed free expression and allusions, and wanton themes and words, which might well have made the fair singer blush. He dedicated this first volume of his *Miscellany*—

> To ilka lovely British lass,
> Frae ladies Charlotte, Anne, and Jean,
> Down to ilk bonny singing Bess
> That dances barefoot on the green.

But though he plumes himself that all uncleanness and ribaldry have been kept out, "that the modest voice and ear of the fair singer might meet no affront,"[2] there is much that is better fitted for "barefooted Bess" than my "lady Charlotte," though probably her ladyship saw no harm.

Nor were the higher classes content with singing Scots songs: not a few accomplished men "trifled with the Muses" in a highly condescending way, and composed excellent verses to old melodies, which Ramsay had inserted in his collection, though, of course, they were too gentlemanly to publish them themselves, and join the vulgar herd of ballad-writers. My Lord Binning, Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, Sir Gilbert Elliot, Hamilton of Bangour, and others contributed to the taste for lyrics; while Scots melodies passed with William Thomson, the former hautbois player in St. Cecilia concerts, to London, where his *Orpheus Caledonius* made them so popular that Gay, in his *Beggar's Opera* and other pieces, set his songs to these tunes to the delight of English ears.[3]

Drinking and tavern-frequenting form, in contrast to this artistic aspect of society, a curious characteristic of Scottish

[1] The first volume of the *Tea-Table Miscellany* appeared in 1724, the fourth volume in 1740. Stenhouse's *Illustrations of Lyrics and Music of Scotland.*

[2] Preface to fourteenth edition of *Tea-Table Miscellany.*

[3] In Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, *Polly*, and *Achilles*, there are many of these tuneful airs put to the English poet's verses.

town life. In Edinburgh, accommodation being extremely limited in the dwelling-houses, there were no rooms in which to transact business with clients or to give entertainments to friends. Men were therefore obliged to resort to the tavern or coffee-house, where the charges were moderate and the rooms were convenient.[1] In these hostelries in the narrow wynds off the High Street tradesmen made their settlements, and drank with their customers to "wet" a bargain. Silversmiths located in Parliament Close made arrangements in John's Coffee-House to supply the present of silver spoons ordered by the bridegroom for his bride, and drank on the occasion a cup of ale at his customer's cost. There again he met his customer to hand over the spoons just arrived from London—for his own stock was small—and then they drank at his own expense, as the bill was being paid. In Paxton's dingy tavern magistrates met to "splice the rope"—the convivial term for the entertainment at which they arranged the details for a hanging. In the tavern advocates met with the writers, when, according to etiquette, the member of the bar had the choice of the morning beverage—usually sherry in a mutchkin stoup—before the case was discussed;[2] and, if the cause was won, client, lawyer, and advocate fraternised once more to celebrate the triumph. So essential was this convivial process that the first and last items in a lawyer's account were the charges of the tavern bill. In the simpler, ruder days, about 1730, Lord Kames says that when the French wine was put down in a tin pint vessel a single drinking-glass served a company for an entire evening, and the first persons who called for a fresh glass with each new pint were considered too luxurious.[3]

In taverns the Lord Provost had his guests to dinner and to supper, where they could drink deeper and longer than in his private house.[4] During the annual meetings of the

[1] Chambers' *Traditions of Edinburgh;* Wilson's *Memorials of Edinburgh.*

[2] Somerville's *Own Life and Times,* p. 373.

[3] Kames' *Sketches of Man,* 1807, i. 507. A Scots pint was two quarts English.

[4] John Coutts, merchant and banker, in 1743 was the first Lord Provost who did the honours of the city by entertaining strangers at his own table. "Unfortunately, he was thus led into excesses of the table and other indulgences which at length hurt his constitution."—Forbes' *Memoirs of a Banking House,* p. 4.

General Assembly of the Church they were swarming with ministers and elders, who, after long parting, quaffed, with a preliminary grace, their friend's good health at meeting. It might happen there was a dispute as to the right of patronage between two lairds or lords; and the rival claimants for the right to appoint the parish minister each sought to win over to his side the ministers before whom his case came to be tried in the Assembly. They regaled those whose votes they wanted freely at breakfast, at dinner, or any other time, in a tavern, while some interested lady of quality also invited them to tea; and after being bribed by her grace and her blandishments, the worthy country ministers would descend the turnpike stair loud in praise of her "leddyship," and proceed to vote convincedly in favour of my lord. No function was so great that it could not be celebrated in those dark rooms in unsalubrious wynds; no functionary was so lofty in rank and position that he could not reside in those unpretentious places of entertainment.[1] In Clerihew's or Fortune's Inn the Lord High Commissioner held his receptions, and gave his dinner-parties for the members of the General Assembly and the magnates of the town, and thence the procession in limp dignity walked with a bevy of ladies behind to the ecclesiastical senate in St. Giles'.

Often, however, the transaction of business was more the excuse than the reason for attendance in taverns. It was a convivial age, and it was a drinking society.[2] When St. Giles'

[1] Simon Lord Lovat interests himself in securing the settlement of a minister at Duffus, by winning the suffrages of some ministers—"prettie men" he knew personally—to support the claim of Dunbar of Newton to be patron against that of Gordon of Gordonston. Each rival party feasts the ministers at the General Assembly to bribe them to give their votes in his favour. Dunbar's agent in Edinburgh writes: "[Mrs. Dunbar] had a multitude of the ministers at tea every day with her. Sir R. Gordon kept open table at Mrs. Herdman's for the clergy always at dinner, and they were bidden resort for breakfast, and call for what they pleased on his account. We, on the other hand, invited and entertained as many ministers as we could for three or four successive nights at supper in a tavern, which comes to no small expens; but since so much hath been wared on this case, and now that it was to receive a final decision, I thought it was a pity to lose for that."—Dunbar's *Social Life in Morayshire*, p. 253.

[2] Sir William Forbes mentions as a singular evidence of the steadiness of Mr. Coutts the banker, that he did not recollect to have ever seen him but once

bells played out half-past eleven in the morning each citizen went to get a gill of ale, which was known as his "meridian," although before breakfast he had paid a similar visit, and in the course of the day he went not seldom with his customers to drink over their bargains. It is not surprising that he was unable to transact his business at times, however highly respectable he might be. In the evening citizens were back at their familiar haunt to spend the evening with congenial friends over a simple fare, with ale or claret, till the town guard beat the ten o'clock drum, warning all decent burghers to withdraw soberly to bed. In the early part of the century the civic law prohibiting all persons from being in taverns and change-houses, cellars, etc., after ten o'clock at night, under penalties at the discretion of the magistrates, according to the degree of their contumacy,[1] was a rule prudently obeyed, and as the tattoo on the drum echoed up the High Street and down the Canongate the inns and cellars disgorged their convivial contents, and in varied stages of inebriety the citizens departed stumbling on the uneven causeway, the younger loiterers repeating with unsteady voice the refrain of the last toping song. In the dark streets came the various companies, young clerks and roystering bucks, and, not infrequently, old merchants and unsober judges,[2] who also made the wynds vocal with their bacchanalian strains. It was a risky homeward journey, for it was the dreaded hour for precipitating from the windows the domestic abominations, and before the cry

in the counting-house disguised with liquor and incapable of transacting business. —*Memoirs of a Banking House*, p. 10.

[1] The old Municipal Act enjoined that "whereas the not obliging persons to repair timeously to their lodgings at night is one of the greatest causes of the abounding drunkenness, uncleanness, night revellings, and other immoralities and disorders both in the houses and in the streets, and is a great hindrance to sober persons in the worship of God in secret, and in their families . . . therefore they prohibit all persons from being in taverns, cellars, etc., after 10 o'clock at night, under penalties at the discretion of the magistrates, according to degree of contumacy," etc.—Arnot's *Hist. of Edinburgh*, p. 193.

[2] "When the noisy ten hours drum
Gars a' your trades gae dandering hame,
Gie a' to merriment and glee,
Wi' sang and glass they fley the power
O' care that wad harass the hour."
"Auld Reekie" in Fergusson's *Poems;* also "Caller Oysters."

"Gardy-loo" could be answered by the deprecatory cry of "Haud yer hand," the awful contents had fallen on cocked hat, laced coat, and wig.[1]

Later in the century the ten o'clock signal might sound, but the topers sat on, magistrates being the most habitual violators of their own laws, and men drank not merely "from the gill-bell to the drum," but long after. Clubs there were of all kinds—for wits and cits, for solid traders and spendthrift youths, for judges and clerks, for men of law, men of letters, and men of leisure — clubs bearing strange names, whose meaning is lost and fine humour has evaporated; but though the company varied, the purpose was ever the same. It must be said that the expenditure of time was the chief expense, for the favourite dishes were cheap—minced collops, rizared haddocks or tripe, a fluke or roasted skate and onions, for which the sum of sixpence was charged. The "Spendthrift Club" enjoyed itself immensely at fourpence half-penny a head.[2]

The meagre comfort and cramped room in the lofty, airless flats can alone explain the delight of men of all sorts and conditions nightly frequenting the convivial retreats—dirty, mean dens, often so dark that even by day candles were lighted to enable the visitor to see his way. Nightly passing into the narrow entry of Anchor Close, gentlemen entered the portal of Douglas's tavern—having inscribed on the stone above the door the pious old legend, "O Lord, in Thee is all my trust,"[3]—and they went through a dark passage, through the kitchen, to the dismal apartment of their frugal orgies, where they ordered "a crum o' tripe, twa three peas, and bit lug o' haddock." In such cellars they were happy; lords, lawyers, lairds met and had their high jinks, and the mirth was loud and the stories

[1] "How long can it be suffered," wrote John Wesley in his *Journal* in 1762, "that all manner of filth should be flung into the streets? How long shall the capital city of Scotland and the chief street of it stink worse than a common sewer?"—*Journal*, iii. p. 52; *Humphrey Clinker*. This terrible practice was continued to the end of the century in spite of the laws of magistrates and the curses of passengers.—*Glasgow Past and Present;* Bristed's *Tour to the Highlands*, 1803, vol. i. p. 28.

[2] Chambers' *Traditions*, ii. 264; R. Fergusson's *Poems*.

[3] This, or Clerihew's, was the scene of Councillor Pleydell's "high jinks" in *Guy Mannering*.

and jests were broad.[1] In one room might be assembled judges relaxing their intellects after deciding subtle points on feudal law, while in the other their clerks caroused, retailing their lordships' Parliament House jokes of yesterday. Lords of Session might indulge with impunity in bacchanalian nights, and waken with brain clear to unravel an intricate case of multiplepoinding next morning; but such ongoings played sad havoc with feebler constitutions. They ruined the health of poor Robert Fergusson the poet, and were more than even Robert Burns could stand in too frequent and too late sittings at the Crochallan Club or in the tavern of John Dowie—most suave of hosts—where judges resorted for their "meridian" in the day, and impecunious men of letters assembled at night, sitting in the narrow little room ominously named the "coffin."[2]

In course of time fashions changed, though social tastes remained the same both in England and in Scotland. The hour for dining up till about 1745 was one o'clock; then it was advanced to two, about 1760 to three o'clock, and in fashionable circles it was even so late as four o'clock.[3] As the dinner-hour became later the style of the repast improved, and consisted of two courses, displaying more variety of fare and more skill in culinary art, though Capt. Topham, with dismay and Anglican loathing, beheld on table the national dishes of solan goose, cocky leeky, sheep's head, and haggis. The advancement of the hour of dinner involved not a few changes in social habits. No longer did merchants and lawyers return as of old to their warehouses or their law-courts after dining. They sat leisurely

[1] Haunts—

> Where ye can get
> A crum o' tripe, ham, dish o' pease,
> An egg, or, cauler frae the seas,
> A fluke or whitin',
> A nice beefsteak; or ye may get
> A guid buffed herring, reisted skate
> An' ingans, an' (though past its date)
> A cut o' veal.—Chambers' *Minor Antiquities*, p. 10.

So Hunter of Blackness describes "Dowie's Tavern."—Kay's *Edinburgh Portraits*, ii. 3.

[2] It is said that one of Burns's exclamations on his deathbed was, "O these Edinburgh gentles—if it hadna been for them I had a constitution would have stood onything!"—Chambers' *Traditions*, ii. 241.

[3] Ramsay's *Scotland and Scotsmen*, ii. 67.

over their wine, in which port gradually took the place of claret. When there were guests the company sat on after the ladies had retired and caroused at length, and did not break up till every bottle was empty and every guest was full. The gentlemen seldom cared or were able to appear in the drawing-room, and how they got home after leaving the convivial board, and back to their lofty flats by precipitous stairs, is more than we can tell and more than they could themselves remember.

There was a free rollicking life in these old days amongst old and young. Nor did ladies hesitate at times to follow the jocund ways of the stronger sex. In company with gentlemen, in wild spirits they would go into the oyster cellars in "laigh" shops, dirty, squalid rooms below the street, and by the flickering light of guttering tallow candles regale themselves on raw oysters and porter, and dance together in the sordid cell, which echoed with their laughter and the clatter of their high-heeled shoes—the voice of Jean Maxwell, afterwards Duchess of Gordon, loudest and merriest of all. Then escorted home, they allowed their partners to adjourn once more, and with punch and brandy toast their "flames" with hiccoughing chivalry.[1] "The misses are the most rotten part of the society," wrote in disapproval the most proper and stately Lady Elliot of Minto.

But in spite of all such vagaries, the social life in some of its moral aspects stands out conspicuously pure compared with that of England.[2] Scandals of married life were few, and brought down social disgrace when they did occur, and the character of womanhood in the middle and higher orders was singularly honourable. Speech was certainly not refined, and was often strangely lacking in delicacy; but the conduct was strict, though the tongue seemed free. Girls, town-bred and country-

[1] Chambers' *Traditions;* Creech's *Fugitive Pieces*, p. 340; Fergusson's *Henry Erskine*, p. 119. Topham's *Letters from Edinburgh*, pp. 128-131.—"The women, who, to do them justice, are much more entertaining than their neighbours in England, discovered a great deal of vivacity and fondness for repartee. The general ease with which they conducted themselves, the innocent freedom of their manners, and the unaffected good nature, all conspired to make one forget that we were regaling in a cellar."—*Songstresses of Scotland*, i. 213.

[2] *Gentleman's Mag.* 1766; Topham's *Letters.*

bred alike, had some provincialism peculiar to their country and the homely life of Scotch-bred damsels. They had a frankness and simplicity which showed itself in retaining the old custom of greeting ladies and gentlemen with a kiss as a mere courtesy—a practice which shocked Captain Topham when he visited Edinburgh in 1774, not because it was unpleasant, but because it was indiscriminate.[1] But the charm of their manners, their face, and even their speech—in spite of its Scots accents and idioms—was the theme of every English visitor, who was supercilious on all other subjects that were Scottish.[2] The complexions, fresh and free from paint; their manners, natural and free from artifice; the sprightliness of their talk; the fineness of their face and figure; the firm tread of their steps, "with joints extended and the toes out," —on these English travellers dilate with admiration throughout the century. People whose minds went back to an earlier time, when style was stiff and ways were prim and manners stately, lamented about 1770 that these were passing away, and that freer, less dignified airs and ways were coming into fashion. But then, lovers of the past are not the wisest and most impartial judges of the present.

After 1760 there came more country gentlemen and noblemen to reside during winter in Edinburgh and take lodgings in Forester's Wynd or Jack's Land. The rise of rents, owing to agricultural improvements, had enabled many now to resort to fashionable society and city life who had been secluded in country houses on narrow incomes.[3] These came with their families to frequent the assemblies, where their presence was welcomed by the bland beams of Miss Murray; and their presence made still more gay St. Cecilia's Hall, where the music of Handel and Corelli was performed on violins by gentlemen, with no little skill, under the guidance of Lord

[1] Topham's *Letters;* Somerville's *Own Life*, p. 371.

[2] *Journey through Scotland*, 1729, p. 276.—This writer had "never seen in any country an assembly of greater beauties." Burt's *Letters;* Topham's *Letters;* *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1766, p. 166; Bristed's *Tour to the Highlands*, ii. 322.

[3] Since 1769 the Canongate included amongst its inhabitants 2 dukes, 16 earls, 2 dowager countesses, 7 lords, 7 lords of session, 13 baronets, 4 commanders of forces, 4 men of eminence (Adam Smith, Dr. Gregory, and others). —Grant's *Old and New Edinburgh*, ii. p. 17.

Kelly—so skilful in composing minuets—whose jovial, coarse, purple face was always seen at these amateur performances. There a brilliant company met—vivid in Lord Cockburn's memories of his boyhood—gentlemen with their side curls, frills and ruffles and silver buckles, matrons in their hoops and splendid satin, girls in high-heeled shoes, powdered hair, and lofty head-dresses.[1]

IV

Besides a social life not always refined and dignified, there gradually appeared signs of literary interest, though they were not very clear or brilliant. In the early part of the century Edinburgh—which implies all Scotland—was well-nigh destitute of literature. The strife—political, social, and religious—had been too long and loud for the voices of poets to be heard; the turmoil of parties was too keen for quiet culture to flourish; the condition of society was too poor, and the taste of the country too rough, for letters to be cultivated. In bygone generations the press had been busy, and printing had been excellent; but when the century began, except a few pamphlets, and inconsiderable works on law, or politics and controversy, nothing was printed except poor editions of favourite devotional works in execrable type. The widow of Anderson, the late king's master printer, claimed inheritance of his patent, giving a practical monopoly of printing Bibles, catechisms, school-books, editions of notable divinity and Bibles, with power to prevent the importation of editions from abroad.[2] Vigorously she prosecuted publishers in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and far-off Aberdeen; although it was vehemently protested that her folios of Poole's *Annotations* and Flavel's works—the great authorities of ministers—were "voluminous blotches"; that her Bibles were scandals—bad type, bad spelling, full of blasphemous

[1] Arnot's *Hist.* 381; Cockburn's *Memorials*, p. 29; Chambers' *Traditions*. "Indeed," wrote Topham, "the degree of attachment which is shown to music in this country exceeds belief. It is not only the principal entertainment but the constant topic of every conversation, and it is necessary not only to be a lover of it, but to be possessed of a knowledge of the science to make oneself agreeable to society."—*Letters from Edinburgh*, p. 396.

[2] *Art of Printing*, by James Watson, Edin. 1712.

blunders, shameful mangling of Holy Writ, fearful printing, where italic and roman were confusedly blended in the same word, and lines where all words ran into each other to form stupendous hieroglyphics.[1] No wonder; for she kept no corrector of the press. The importunate widow only gave way when law and patience could endure her exactions no longer. The best printers of the time were Jacobites; but in many a cellar there were printers working old machines brought over from Holland, to whom Whigs and Presbyterians sent their manuscripts, which came forth in mean pamphlets, with paper, type, and shape miserable to behold.

But, after all, there was little literature to suffer from these troubles. Dr. Archibald Pitcairn, scholar and physician and wit, got his verses and Latin elegies printed on sheets, and handed them to his friends, and a few writers of little importance had a furtive publicity. But the first literature worthy to survive came from the little wig-maker's shop at the sign of the Mercury in the High Street—satires and songs that were printed on broadsides, and sold for a penny. Since 1711 Allan Ramsay had been writing, making wigs, if not "barberising" customers in his night-cap, albeit he boasted his descent from the honourable house of Dalhousie. In 1721 his collected poems were published; in 1725 his *Gentle Shepherd* appeared. He had given up his wigs and his curling-tongs, and transferred the books he had begun to sell to the flat in the Luckenbooths, over which he placed his new sign—the heads of Ben Jonson and Drummond of Hawthornden. He filled his shelves with books for sale, conspicuous among them his edition of the *Gentle Shepherd* from Ruddiman's press in "Turkey clad"; and he got from London a supply of works to lend out on his forming the first circulating library in the country. His shop was the resort of all that were literary and genial; his presence the merriest and vainest at the Easy Club, where "men of parts" recited their own verses and heard mild essays, and men of good fellowship sang jovially, and drank copiously, till long past "the drum." No figure

[1] Here are samples given by Principal Lee: "Whyshoulditbethoug tathingincredible w^{t}you, y^{t} God should raise the dead?" "&adamselcameuntohim."—*Memorial of Bible Societies in Scotland*, 1824, p. 166.

was more familiar in the streets than the poet's, then "a dapper, neat little man of five feet four"; in mellower years, a squat form with big paunch, fair round wig above a humorous countenance, expressive of great self-satisfaction. Where could Mr. John Gay,[1] when visiting her eccentric Grace the Duchess of Queensberry, find more congenial talk than in the brother poet's shop? There the English bard—remembered as "a pleasant little man in a tye-wig," paunchy like his friend—exchanged news of the London world of letters for explanation of obscure words in the ex-wigmaker's Scots, and gazed from the window with amusement at the gay, busy throng that promenaded the High Street from one to two o'clock each day.[2]

Successful as Ramsay was with his poems, which brought fame and guineas to his till, there was scanty encouragement for letters—no patrons worth an author's obsequious dedication, few book-lovers to subscribe for even the smallest edition of a work, no public that cared to buy. Wisely, in 1725, James Thomson went to England with his poem on *Winter* in his pocket. Eleven years later Smollett set off to London by pack-horse with his surgeon's lancets and his *Regicide* in his bag. There, too, Malloch had gone to seek scope for his talents in English society, and had changed his name to Mallet to suit the English ears. Meanwhile, booksellers in obscure booths in Parliament Close dealt mainly in divinity—Durham on *Revelation*, *The Balm of Gilead*, Gray's *Sermons*, Rutherford's *Letters*, historical tractates, vehement pamphlets of scholars and divines, and poorly printed classics imported for schools from Holland. The news of the day was sparingly conveyed in puny sheets twice a week, chief of them being the *Edinburgh Courant* (first issued in 1718), in the interest of the Whigs, and the *Caledonian Mercury* (which appeared in 1720), favoured by the Tories. But it was difficult to extract any interest from those newspapers that gave no news, containing a London letter giving meagre tidings of what had happened long before, or never happened at all, intelligence of a vessel

[1] *Gentle Shepherd*, with Illustrations of Scenery, 2 vols. 1814; *Poems* of Allan Ramsay, 2 vols. 1800.

[2] Wilson's *Memorials of Edinburgh*, i. 199.

arrived with timber and tallow yesterday at Leith, and advertisements of half a dozen "roups" next week.[1]

Besides men of pretty wit who wrote verses and gentlemen who were antiquaries, there were some threadbare scholars—usually portentous pedants—who had failed as schoolmasters or missed a church, and paid their lodgings by writing vituperative pamphlets on grammar or politics or history. Stumping along the causeway was William Lauder, an excellent scholar and an exceeding scoundrel, who vainly tried for posts in every school and university, wrote malignant treatises, and left for London, where he published, under a commendatory preface by Dr. Johnson, his forged Latin originals to prove *Paradise Lost* a vile plagiarism, much to the excitement of literary circles. Not a pleasant man to look on as he passed down the High Street, with his wooden leg, "sallow complexion, large rolling eyes, stentorian voice, and sanguine [that is villanous] temper."[2]

Best of all the band of scholars was the erudite Jacobite Thomas Ruddiman, who had been brought by Dr. Pitcairn from his schoolhouse at Laurencekirk and a salary of £5 paid in oatmeal. Since 1700 he had lived in Edinburgh, beginning his career with an income of £8 as assistant in Advocates' Library, in dark rooms in Milne Square. He sold books by auction, corrected for the press, taught and boarded pupils, set up a printing press, conducted a newspaper, wrote historic treatises and pamphlets against every opponent who belittled the merits of Arthur Johnston's Latinity or the iniquities of George Buchanan's politics, issued classics, and compiled schoolbooks (among them his famous *Latin Rudiments*), till he became nearly blind, and died at eighty-three in 1757. No more worthy man lived in the city than the old scholar, who on Sundays, in the Episcopal meeting-house in Gray's Close, was to be seen with "his curled grizzle wig, yellow cloth coat, scarlet waistcoat, decorated with broad gold lace, and shirt with very deep ruffles"—for he had become a prosperous man, as was the great grammarian's due.

[1] In 1739 the *Caledonian Mercury*, printed by Ruddiman, had a circulation of only 1400 every week.—Chalmers' *Life of Ruddiman*, p. 143, where is much information about previous Scots newspapers. *Literary Hist. of Glasgow* (Maitland Club).

[2] Chalmers' *Life of Ruddiman*, pp. 150, 274.

But of real literature, save the poems of Ramsay, there were still few signs; till, in 1738, there appeared in London a *Treatise of Human Nature* by David Hume, then twenty-five years old. It fell, as the author cheerfully confesses, "still-born from the press"; which did not discourage him from publishing, within a few years, those philosophical essays which slowly established his name in literature and his place in sceptical philosophy, creating a panic fright in orthodox circles, which was borne with placidity by the simple-souled and good-humoured philosopher—verily, the "mildest-mannered man that ever scuttled" a creed.[1]

After the middle of the century there was a wider awakening of intellectual life in Edinburgh, and in Scotland generally. Hume was busy with his *History of England*, which began to appear in 1754; his friend Home was writing his tragedy of *Douglas* in his manse at Athelstaneford; Dr. Robertson was engaged with his *History of Scotland*, which was to make him famous in the winter of 1759. Adam Ferguson, Hugh Blair, Adam Smith, and others, were soon to make Edinburgh a literary centre and literature a matter of fashion to gentlemen. Engrossed in the new taste for English letters, society cast no regard on the poor, shabbily-dressed copying clerk that threaded his way through the High Street crowd with his law papers, who for but two years was to write Scots poems and songs of the truest ring, before Burns wrote them surpassingly, and after too fond carouses o' nights, was to die in 1774 on the straw of a madhouse, at the age of twenty-four, when ended the short pathetic career of Robert Fergusson. At that time the effort was not to write Scots, but to learn to write English. Home, Reid, Robertson strove indefatigably to clear their pages of every provincial idiom, and every Scotsman anxiously consulted English friends for guidance and correction. They fairly succeeded, but not without pains, for Dr. Beattie owned that "we who live in Scotland are obliged to study English for books like a dead language which we can understand but cannot speak. Our style smells of the lamp and we are slaves of the language, and are continually afraid of committing gross

[1] Burton's *Life of Hume*, 2 vols., 1840; *Letters of D. Hume*, edited by Hill, p. 107.

blunders."[1] Accordingly the author of the *Minstrel* had pored over Addison, Swift, and Lord Lyttleton to learn to write this foreign tongue—labours which met their reward, when he became the idol of blue-stockings in London, and fashionable circles mistook an "elegant writer" for a profound philosopher. Naturally these authors published their works in London, but as naturally they chose countrymen to publish them, for eminent Scots booksellers abounded in the capital—Millar, Strahan, and Murray.

Intellectual activity was spreading in all circles. The Select Society, founded by the versatile and energetic Allan Ramsay, the portrait-painter, changed in 1755 to the Society for Encouraging Art, Science, and Industry. Noblemen, lairds, judges, ministers, advocates, engaged in these meetings—not unconnected with suppers and claret—for promoting husbandry, linen trade, and the fostering of art—which it did by offering prizes for drawings that never won them.[2] At the Bar there were men of wit and forensic ability who afterwards made themselves conspicuous on the bench or even famous in the senate; there were men of science and philosophy who redeemed the University from the obscurity under which it had lain for generations; and ecclesiastics of distinction who by their good-breeding rebutted the wholesale charges of uncouthness against the clergy, and by their tolerance were to relieve them from the indiscriminate taunt of fanaticism. These men were well-known figures in the crowded streets of Edinburgh. As one looked, about 1771, down from the lofty windows in the High Street, opposite the place where the old Market Cross had stood near St. Giles', and where the citizens and townsfolk most did congregate, there were more men of note to be seen in an afternoon than could have before been seen in a century. There appeared the ponderous figure of David Hume, his fat body encased in brown coat and waistcoat, toiling up the street, and walking with him Principal Robertson, in his single-breasted black coat, cauliflower wig, cocked hat, and clerical bands—divine and deist on the best of terms. Gently through

[1] Letter to Lord Glenbervie, Forbes' *Life of Beattie*, vol. ii. 243. See *Letters of David Hume* (edited by Hill), p. 105.

[2] Allan Cunningham's *Lives of British Painters*; Tytler's *Life of Lord Kames*.

the crowd glided a tiny stooping form, with arms hanging limp like a bird with shot wings, with a placid sweet face, surmounted by a brown wig and cocked hat, who was Dr. John Erskine, most saintly of ministers and gentlest of saints. Past him would brush with rough jest, in loud rasping voice, the truculent figure, clad in gown and wig, of Robert Macqueen (afterwards Lord Braxfield), with a fierce humour glowering from his shaggy eyebrows. Among the throng the tall figure of Lord Kames, begowned and bewigged, with hat under his arm, might be seen stooping in eager converse with a very dirty caddie, from whom he is extracting all the gossip of the town; and Dr. Adam Smith, who had crossed by ferry from Kirkcaldy, ascended the street oblivious and vacant-eyed, his lips moving in that almost audible smiling converse with himself, which made an old woman mistake him for an idiot, and exclaim to her neighbour in pity, "Ay, an' he's weel put on too." Dr. Hugh Blair was there, self-complacent, self-conscious, with wig perfect in every curl, and dress in fine precision; and there strode by Dr. Alexander Webster, the brightest talker, most unctuous preacher, steadiest drinker, most able business man of the old city, who made the plans for the new town, loved by the saints of the Tolbooth Kirk and the sinners of the High Street flats. In his sedan-chair was borne the great physician Dr. Cullen, known everywhere by his strange pendulous lips, in a huge peruke beneath his capacious hat, his big coat flaps sticking out with the huge sand-glass by which he counted his patients' pulses.[1] Dr. Black, the great chemist, went on his way to lecture at the College, greeting old cronies with a charming smile on his benign face; and if the rain was threatening, Lord Monboddo, the learned whimsical judge (whose *Origin of Language* had just appeared, showing how mankind had gradually shed their primeval tails), put his judge's wig into a sedan-chair to keep it dry, while he himself walked quietly home in the rain; for not till 1782 did Mr. Alexander Wood, the surgeon, appear with the first umbrella, a huge gingham apparatus, in Edinburgh streets.[2] James Boswell came by from James's Court,

[1] Chambers' *Traditions*, i. 105.

[2] Kay's *Edinburgh Portraits*, ii. 368.

fussy of manner, rubicund of face, with a self-important look bent on some unimportant errand, thinking over a song for the "Soaping Club" that night. These and many others pass along of a spring afternoon in 1771, to join the gossiping cluster of citizens and merchants and bankers and bucks, who stood with their hands in their muffs.

Others resorted to Creech's bookshop and library, in the premises at the Luckenbooths, below old Allan Ramsay's flat; there gathered daily the quidnuncs of the town, to see the newest books from London, and to hear of the newest arrivals from the country, or to chat with the worthy bibliopole as he stood on the steps. At supper-parties of judges and nobles, or eminent lawyers, were to be met the best of good company —Dr. Adam Ferguson; Dr. Blacklock, the blind poet; Dr. Gregory; John Home, when my Lord Bute could set him free from his sight; Lord Elibank, most cultivated and literary of peers, when he spent the winter in Scotland; Henry Erskine, brightest and wittiest of men at the bar; and Andrew Crosbie, the Councillor Pleydell of *Guy Mannering*, great as a pleader, as a talker, and as a toper. At these reunions in Edinburgh flats, over collops, boiled fowls, and port, met the literati—whom deep-drinking Lord Kellie, with his purple-faced laugh, nicknamed the *eaterati*.[1] Ladies were there who, all unknown, had written songs that all society was singing. Lady Anne Lindsay heard her own ballad "Auld Robin Gray" sung to the accompaniment of the harp, and applauded by companies who were unaware that the bright blushing girl in the corner had written it; and as she looked down from the window of the lofty flat where the old Lady Balcarres dwelt, she could see a company of dancing dogs acting in the streets the little song-drama.[2] At card-parties of quality Miss Jean Elliot, possessed of a stately carriage becoming her family, often listened to her own exquisite "Flowers of the Forest," ("I've heard them lilting"), on whose authorship she too kept dignified silence; for with aristocratic reserve these ladies cared as little

[1] *Lives of the Lindsays*, ii. 320.

[2] *Lives of the Lindsays*, ii. 393; *Songstresses of Scotland*, i. 207, ii. 24. With equal success Lady Wardlaw of Pitreavie, who died in 1727, concealed her authorship of *Hardyknute*, which for over a century literary experts lauded as an ancient ballad of rare beauty.

to join the herd of writers as Miss Oliphant of Gask, who kept the secret for forty years of having written "The Land o' the Leal"—content to write "by stealth, and blush to find it fame." No more intelligent company was to be found than in the rooms of poorly-jointured ladies—such as that of Dowager Lady Balcarres, who received her company in the bedroom, with a neat coverlet over the bed, while against one of the posts lent her consequential servant John, who handed the tea-kettle and joined in the conversation.[1]

The growth of literature, in which was required the art of writing English,—the writers addressed an English public—and the more frequent communication between England and Scotland, made both the lettered and the fashionable classes painfully conscious that their vernacular had sunk from a national language of which to be proud, into a provincial dialect of which to be ashamed. Of old every one spoke Scots; it was broad, though not therefore vulgar, for there was a world of difference between the tongue as spoken by a gentleman and as spoken by a ploughman; and from the lips of well-bred ladies it fell pleasingly, if not quite intelligibly, on southern ears. Now, however, it was awkward for a man of letters to lapse into solecisms, and for a man of fashion to flounder hopelessly in Scotticisms. The member for a Scottish county felt himself uncouth in London society, and when he rose in the House of Commons he dreaded the supercilious smile at the sound of an unknown tongue. Advocates pleading before the Lords saw that they created amazement by the strange pronunciation of Latin, and still stranger pronunciation of the king's English.[2] When the Hon. Charles Townshend, who had married the Dowager Lady Dalkeith, had been admitted a member of the Edinburgh Select Society, which consisted of the foremost men of ability and position, he protested that he could not understand what

[1] Chambers' *Threiplands of Fingask*, p. 58.

[2] Three Lords of Justiciary were ordered to appear at the bar of the House of Lords about the Porteous mob. "Brethren," said Lord Dun pompously, as he supped with his fellow-judges, "I am sorry to say neither of you will be understood by the House to-morrow. I am, you well know, in a different situation, having made the English language my particular study." To-morrow came, when (Lord Kames said) Lord Royston was hardly intelligible; as for my Lord Dun, "Deil ae word from beginning to end did the English understand of his speech." —Ramsay's *Scotland and Scotsmen*, ii. 543.

they said in their debates, and cruelly suggested that an interpreter should be employed. "Why," asked he, "can you not learn to speak the English language as you have learned to write it?" for it had been the anxiety of his literary friends Hume and Robertson to weed out every provincialism from their historical pages.

In 1761 it happened that Mr. Thomas Sheridan,[1] actor, stage-manager, and elocutionist, came to lecture on rhetoric and the art of speaking, and delivered twelve lectures in St. Paul's Episcopal Chapel. To that consecrated but not solemnising building in the dismal Carrubber's Wynd resorted about three hundred gentlemen, nobles, judges, divines, advocates, and men of fashion. With the docility of children they gave ear to these pretentious discourses, in which the self-confident orator, in rich Irish brogue, taught pure English pronunciation to a broad-Scots-speaking assembly. Gravely they listened as he profoundly explained how "the next progression of number is when the same note is repeated; but in such a way that one makes a more sensible impression on the ear than the other by being more forcibly struck and therefore having a greater degree of loudness—as *tĭ-tum*, or *tum-tĭ-tūm-tĭ*, and when the weak notes precede a more forcible one, as *tă-tă-tum*; or when they follow as *tūm-tĭ-tĭ*, *tum-tĭ-tĭ*," and so on. Carefully, meekly, his audience practised the "*tum-ti-ti-tum*" in their rooms, with all the success that would attend a ploughman's earnest efforts to learn a gavotte. Availing himself of the zeal of the hour, Mr. Sheridan adroitly secured subscriptions for the forthcoming publication of his stimulating lectures, which only saw the light after persistent dunning by the subscribers, who got their copies when their patience and their Anglican accents were wearing away.

Meanwhile, full of enthusiasm, the members of the Select Society, originated chiefly for literary discussion, changed its name finally into the "Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language";[2] and next year, at their

[1] Ritchie's *Life of David Hume*, 1807, p. 95; *Scottish Journal*, ii.; Campbell's *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, 1857, vii. p. 364; *Scots Magazine*, 1761, p. 391.

[2] The prospectus is not encouraging: "As the intercourse between this part of Great Britain and the capital daily increases, gentlemen have long been sensible

request, Sheridan sent a teacher from London to instruct them in correct pronunciation. Young advocates like Wedderburn, and mature judges like Kames; noble lords—Galloway, Eglinton, Errol; literary men like Hume, Blair, and Robertson, all began to try to syllable their words aright, to the sarcastic amusement of the old-fashioned at their efforts to rid themselves of the old tongue without being able to learn the new. In two years members seceded from the transformed society, subscriptions fell into arrears, and the committee with sulky dignity reported that the condition of affairs "serves to confirm an observation that has sometimes been made that in Scotland every disinterested plan of public utility is slighted as soon as it loses the charm of novelty." Most of these gentlemen in despair spoke broad colloquial Scots to their dying day, however carefully they might speak decent English in fine southern society, at the bar, or in the pulpit. The vernacular was racy on the lips of Henry Erskine, kindly and genial in the talk of Principal Robertson, delightfully vivid and expressive in the converse of high-bred dames possessed of astringent humour, while it added grotesqueness to the preposterous utterances of Lord Hermand, and appropriate brutality to those of Lord Braxfield.

As time wore on the broad Scots wore off from the talk of men of education and ladies of refinement.[1] The younger and more ambitious by 1770 were trying to prune their conversation of Scots phrases, and spoke English, as the Duke of Wellington spoke French, "with a great deal of courage," and most of them succeeded enough to merit the tepid praise earned by James Boswell from Johnson when he asked his illustrious friend what he thought of his speech: "Sir, your pronunciation is not often disagreeable." Nor did the Scots accents fall unpleasantly on the English ears, especially when

of the disadvantage under which they labour from the imperfect knowledge of the English language and the impropriety with which they speak in. . . . Experience hath convinced Scotsmen that it is not impossible for persons born and educated in this country to acquire such as to write it with considerable purity. But with regard to speaking with propriety it has generally been taken for granted that there was no prospect of attempting anything with any prospect of success."—Ritchie's *Life of Hume*, 1807, p. 95.

[1] See *ante*, p. 76.

it fell from pretty lips. After the memorable visit of the great lexicographer to Edinburgh in 1773, immense pains were taken by governesses and teachers in private and public ladies' schools to instruct their pupils in the most correct and refined manner of pronouncing syllables and words. The efforts were more confusing than successful.

V

As the broad Scots was narrowing, the narrow old religion was broadening: owing very much to the same causes—contact with English life, and larger intercourse with the world. The strict and inquisitorial discipline of former times could not be maintained if there had been any disposition to exercise it in a population which was increasing, till at the close of the century it numbered above 80,000 people. Up to 1760 the Sunday was a day of rigorous observance, of deep solemnity, when the streets were deserted save in multitudinous going to and coming from the worship where attendance was obligatory as a religious duty and as a badge of respectability —even David Hume, the arch-infidel, was to be seen "sitting under" Principal Robertson in Greyfriars'. By 1780 or 1790, however, a great change had come over the religious habits of society, and the pews, which of old had been always sedately full, were deserted by men of fashion. Henry Mackenzie—the "Man of Feeling"[1]—contrasts the days of his boyhood, when "I well remember the reverential silence of the streets, the tip-toe kind of fear with which when any accident prevented my attendance at church I used to pass through them," with the later and regardless days of the century, when the streets were noisy and gay, and the church was neglected by the gentry; when, unabashed and unrebuked, the barbers bore the wigs to their customers and came to shave them on the Lord's Day; and gentlemen even dared to play cards on Sunday, to the subversion of all pious traditions and propriety.[2]

[1] Mackenzie's *Life and Writings of John Home*, p. 44.

[2] Among the unpublished MSS. of Dr. Carlyle of Inveresk is a "Letter addressed to Mr. Mirror," evidently intended to appear in the *Mirror*, purporting to be dated from Perthshire, April 1, 1779, by a gentleman recently returned

The theatre also had greatly lost its stigma, and the clergy had ceased to ban it. In fact, when Mrs. Siddons came to act, ministers went in such numbers that the General Assembly, then sitting, was half-deserted by its members; and pious sober-minded citizens were induced to go, though with fear and trembling, to the playhouse for the first time, for the tragedy queen had made it respectable.[1] Other tastes had changed, though not always for the better—cockpits having become the favourite resort of gilded youth and sporting men, and "mains" having become the occasions of ruinous gambling. Mr. William Creech, who in his bookshop in the Luckenbooths met with wits, citizens, and literati, and from his windows, which looked down the long High Street, watched a tide of humanity as ever-flowing if not so varied as that which rejoiced Dr. Johnson in Fleet Street, saw and heard much to bewail about 1780-1790, in a degenerate age[2]—churches ill-frequented and church collections diminishing, people that were worldly and ministers that were lax in their visitations; but at any rate he does own that immoderate drinking and "pushing the bottle" was in 1790 going out of fashion with educated people, "pressing" was not so common,

from the continent:—"Mr. Mirror, it was with great pleasure that I observed in one of your papers a side thrust against playing at cards on Sunday, which with many other modes of vice we have learned from the people on the Continent, and which I am very sorry to see prevails much more amongst us now than it did twenty years ago when I left the country. . . . I had heard before I returned to my native land that there was a great change with respect to the rigorous observation of the Sabbath, and I found it so on experience. A man may now shave himself on Sunday morning, and powder his hair and walk after church time, and even visit his neighbours without giving offence, which was very far from being the case in my youth. But I little dreamed that it would have been possible for Presbyterians to have so far lowered the ideal of the morality of the Sabbath as to have played at cards on any part of that day. . . . I am one of those who think it very wrong to shock the people with whom I live. . . . I go to the parish church on Sunday lest the people should think me a heathen or an infidel, and I continue to say grace tho' it be left off as ungenteel by many of my neighbours."

[1] Jackson's *Hist. of Scot. Stage*, p. 125; Kay's *Original Portraits*, i. 132. A staid old lawyer was persuaded to visit the theatre for the first time in his life to see Mrs. Siddons in *Venice Preserved*. When the catastrophe came he turned to his daughter and asked if this was a comedy or a tragedy? "Bless me! papa, a tragedy to be sure!" "So I thought," remarked her father; "for I am beginning to feel a commotion."

[2] *Fugitive Pieces*, p. 108.

and every one was allowed at table to do as he pleased in filling or drinking his glass.

While society was making its own rules for the morals and manners of fashionable circles, a decrepit police was trying to maintain good order in the city, and to suppress crime. It might be supposed that in a town abounding in intricate wynds, dingy closes, and dark stairs, and with a large class steeped in poverty, lawlessness and robbery would be common. But, on the contrary, there seems to have prevailed a remarkable immunity from crime. The fact that every one knew everybody, the intimate contact of high and low, rich and poor, may have served as a sort of social detectivism, and made theft rare, by the comparative ease with which culprits could be watched. The charge of order and the preservation of the lieges was committed to a small and effete band of city guards, consisting of 120 men all told—very few of whom were kept on duty, the others acting more usefully as porters or scavengers. A long low building that blocked and disfigured the High Street, opposite the Tolbooth, formed the headquarters of these old Highlanders, most of them discharged soldiers, who guarded the lives and adorned the processions of the city, armed with ineffectual Lochaber axes. They were sources of mirth rather than of safety, these much provoked worthies, nicknamed the "town rottens" (or "rats"), who never could catch an offender, and spluttered their futile Gaelic oaths at urchins who sorely mocked them.[1] Outside the shed in which they were stationed was a wooden horse, which drunkards were made ignominiously to bestride; and under the shed was a cellar, to which disturbers of the civic peace were consigned at night.

Such a system of police, which might have served in a little town, had become ludicrous long before they were superseded by more stalwart men to look after a city with a wider radius and large population. Yet in spite of all, throughout the century—as, indeed, through all the country—there were very few serious offences. Housebreaking and robbery are said to have been extremely rare, and with complete sense of security people seldom thought of locking their doors at

[1] Chambers' *Traditions;* Kay's *Portraits;* Wilson's *Memorials.*

night.[1] Except in such seasons as when the notorious Deacon Brodie and his confederates perpetrated their burglaries (1783-1787), there was little danger felt. In the Tolbooth prison, among its few inmates were more debtors than criminals; and years passed by without any execution, though robbery was a capital offence. Probably the chief, most venial, and most prevailing offence was drunkenness.[2]

By 1770 there were signs setting in of the approaching transformation of Edinburgh—in the city and society. The town, which had remained within its ancient bounds and walls for 250 years, was becoming too circumscribed for its population, which filled the streets that had grown in height instead of length; spaces behind the Canongate and High Street, once occupied by pleasant gardens, had long been built over by wynds and courts, and no more room was left for its increasing inhabitants to build on. About 1760 there had been erected squares of "self-contained" houses south of the town, to which some richer families resorted; and yet, though only a few minutes' walk from their business and their friends, Brown Square and George Square were considered terribly out of the way, so that gentlemen required to take refreshment in the tavern before the journey. In 1767 the North Bridge was finished, and access to a new district became easier, while old merchants spoke with astonishment about the enormous rents of £30 or £40 which ambitious rivals were paying for shops beside the "Brig." Plans by that time had been formed for streets on the other side of the "Nor' Loch" (the lake or swamp now the Princes Street Gardens); but slow progress was made till 1780, when new streets were springing up, and

[1] Creech's *Fugitive Pieces*, pp. 106-108. "During the winter 1790-92 there was not a robbery, housebreaking, shopbreaking, nor a theft publicly known to the amount of forty shillings within the city of Edinburgh; not a person accused of a capital crime, and in jail only twenty for petty offences, and nineteen confined for small debts."

[2] The extent to which drinking (especially of whisky, which had taken the place of the less potent ale) had increased may be estimated by the fact that in 1790, in a population of 80,000, there were 2011 licensed and unlicensed shops for retailing spirituous liquors, 1611 being licensed. Out of this number only 159 had taken out licenses for selling foreign spirits, so that all the rest must have been employed in providing whisky for the lower orders.—Arnot's *Hist. of Edinburgh*, p. 335.

houses in Princes Street, George Street, and Queen Street were advancing westward. From the old flats descended in gradual exodus persons of position and quality, who, instead of a modest rental of £15 or £20, were able now, through advancing wealth and larger incomes, to pay £100 for mansions which contrasted strangely with the mean and dirty abodes from which they emerged. They left those dwellings where there had been little cleanliness or comfort, where fetid air brought sickness and death to young lives, where infectious diseases passed like wildfire through the inmates of a crowded common stair, bringing havoc to many a household.[1]

Town and town-life underwent a revolution, and many a quaintly pleasant and picturesque feature of Scottish society soon became a mere memory. Fortunately, the old taverns lost their "genteel" company, and gentlemen met temperately at home in their spacious dining-rooms, instead of in miserable cellars, over their mutchkin and glass. The sedan-chairs were becoming worn out, like the chairmen who had carried in them so many fair occupants, with towering powdered headdresses, to the dance, and for 6d. an hour had shaken their burdens over the causeway, and up closes where no carriage could enter. These were discarded for hackney coaches that drove swiftly along handsome though unfinished streets; and by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the last surviving private chair, which bore along the dignified Miss Jean Elliot, was an object of curiosity.[2] Other changes came—some that were not grateful. The delightful old simplicity of manners, the unceremonious friendliness, the genial gatherings around the tea-table, where the company discussed their "fifty friends within five hundred yards";[3] the familiar intercourse and sympathy between rich

[1] Sir W. Scott's *Provincial Antiquities:* Edinburgh.

[2] Tytler and Watson's *Songstresses of Scotland*, i. 221.

[3] All this quaint simplicity had gone, leaving only far-off memories of the old days:—

Little was stown then, and less gaed to waste,
Barely a mullen for mice or for rattens;
The thrifty housewife to the Fleshmarket paced,
Her equippage a' just a guid pair o' pattens.

Folk were as gude then and friends were as leal,
Though coaches were scant with their cattle a-cantrin;
Right air, we were tell't by the housemaid or chiel,
"Sic, an' ye please, here's your lass and your lantern."

"Change in Edinburgh," Sir Alex. Boswell's *Poetical Works*.

and poor, formed by proximity in the same turnpike stair; the quaint old dowager ladies of rank and poverty, who, on "small genteel incomes," and with one maid-servant, kept up a tiny establishment and gave slender entertainments in a fourth flat,—all these passed away for ever.

By the close of the century these "lands," in multitudinous closes, were becoming deserted by the upper classes. Although some clung on tenaciously to their patrimonial tenements, the bulk of quality and fashion had gone to reside on the other side of the swampy North Loch, quitting for ever the old haunts where so long a teeming friendly population of gentle and simple had dwelt, leaving for ever ancient flats associated with ages of dirt and dignity, of smells and social mirth. The old rooms received new occupants—pawnbrokers lived where lords of session had dwelt; washerwomen cleaned clothes in chambers where fine ladies had worn them; mechanics, with their squalling brats, occupied apartments whose decorated mantelpieces and painted ceilings told of departed greatness—rooms where in bygone days the gayest of the town had met, when they were scenes of all that had been brightest and merriest of olden life.[1]

With the New Town of Edinburgh began a new social existence in Scotland.

[1] "In 1763 people of quality and fashion lived in houses which in 1783 were inhabited by tradesmen or by people in humble and ordinary life. The Lord Justice-Clerk Tinwald's house was possessed by a French teacher, Lord President Craigie's house by a rouping wife or saleswoman of old furniture, and Lord Drummore's house was left by a chairman for want of accommodation."—Creech's *Fugitive Pieces*, p. 64.

CHAPTER IV

TOWN SOCIETY—GLASGOW

I

PREVIOUS to the Union of 1707 Glasgow possessed no industrial life or energy; its population was little over 12,500, having rapidly diminished from the number of 14,600 which had peopled the city in 1660.[1] When the seventeenth century closed, its prosperity was so decayed that many of the better class of houses were unoccupied, and those which were inhabited were let at a third of their former rents; the trade was mean, and the commerce was insignificant, for the citizens owned no more than fifteen vessels, whose aggregate tonnage was 1182 tons, the largest ship having a burden of only 160 tons.

The shallow channel of the Clyde, with its many sand-banks, could not admit any vessel farther up the river than fourteen miles from the Broomielaw—then, as its name suggests, the flat banks covered with "broom," as Birkenhead was with "birches,"—and up and down the stream only small boats could ply.[2] Any ship engaged in foreign trade required, therefore, to load and unload her cargo at harbours distant from the town, whence goods were conveyed along the ill-made tracks on little pack-horses, which bore on their feeble backs with difficulty a load of two hundredweight at a time.

[1] Denholm's *Hist. of Glasgow*, 1804, p. 110.

[2] In 1775 the Clyde was deepened, so that vessels drawing 6 feet of water could be brought to Glasgow, and in 1798 vessels drawing 9½ feet.—Cleland's *Rise and Progress of Glasgow*, p. 113.

From Dumbarton, many miles away, or from Port Glasgow (since 1705 by name and for convenience intended to be the port of the city), the freights were borne laboriously along, while such bulky materials as timber from Norway were transported on boats on the river. The trade engaged in was insignificant alike in quantity and in kind—dried herring and salmon, stockings, sheep skins, coarse serges, tarred rope, consigned to Norway, France, and Holland. The industries were rudimentary and unskilled. On the Firth were great numbers of men fishing for the abundant salmon and herring, which, when dried or salted, were sent abroad or sold to the people, being a principal article of their food, and the repast of labourers, seamen, and reapers in the harvest.[1] In the little town weavers were engaged, partly on linen, but chiefly on woollen stuffs, the oldest and most characteristic product being the making of plaiding—a coarse fabric of which the worthy citizens of St. Mungo were so vastly proud, that in 1715 the magistrates resolved to send "a swatch of plaiding to the Princess of Wales as the manufacture belonging to this place."[2] For Her Royal Highness's instruction they thoughtfully explain, that these plaids are "such as is generally used in Scotland, and as worn by the women as covers when they goe abroad, and by some men as morning guns [gowns], and for hangings for bed-chambers."

These were but the beginnings of a new life.[3] Ten years later linen manufacture began to be a staple of industry in the West of Scotland; the sound of the shuttle was heard in street after street from two thousand looms through the open doors from morning till night, engaged in making linen, lawn, and cambric. 1735 saw the first tape or incle factory in the kingdom set up under the enterprising Harvey, who had wormed out the secret of its production in Holland, and brought over two looms and a Dutch workman to initiate

[1] Spreull's *Accompt Current*, etc., 1705; Denholm's *Hist. of Glasgow*, p. 402. For sustenance of the seamen seven herrings were allowed to each man.—Macgeorge's *Old Glasgow*, p. 234. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 247.

[3] On the various industries of Glasgow, in their rise and progress, local histories are full of many but necessarily monotonous facts. Gibson, Brown, Denholm, Macgeorge, and others, state the story with conscientious detail in books whose pages it is needless to cite particularly.

his countrymen into the process. There were the signs of activity everywhere—the making of glass, shoes, pottery, ropes, and carpets. A short distance from the Trongate, then surrounded by orchards and fields, there was a factory for making candles, and as the goods were carried to customers through the "rigs" of the field, the district became known by the name, which the dingy street reared on its ground still bears, of the "Candlerigs." So busy was the little city that it is said in 1750 "every child was at work, and not a beggar was to be seen."[1]

But for the chief cause of this extraordinary development we must go back to the Union of 1707.[2] Before that event there was no scope for commercial energy or enterprise for Glasgow. How could it compete in foreign trade with towns on the east coast? Their own vessels required to sail with baffling winds all round the north of the country before making for the ports of Holland or Norway, while vessels from Leith or Dundee sailed quickly and directly over. At the same time the English laws had prohibited all Scots trade with America and the Indies, to which their ships could sail right across the Atlantic.[3] This obstacle was removed by that Union, which was received with a howl of national indignation. Quickly taking advantage of the change, a few men put their little capital together, got goods for barter, chartered a small vessel from Whitehaven, and sent her forth beyond the seas. The captain acted as supercargo, set out for Virginia, where he stayed till his cargo was disposed of, and returned with rum and tobacco and some money, which (tradition says) he handed to his employers in a stocking.[4]

[1] Gibson's *Hist. of Glasgow*, 1777.

[2] The humble scale on which business was conducted in these old days is indicated by the anxious comment of Wodrow from his manse at Eastwood, a few miles away from the city, whose bold ventures stagger him as tempting Providence. In 1709 he writes: "In the beginning of this month [November] Borrowstounness and Glasgow have suffered very much by the fleet going to Holland, it being taken by the French. It is said that in all there is £80,000 sterling lost there, whereof Glasgow has £10,000. I wish trading persons may see the language of this providence."—*Analecta*, i. 218. In 1727 there were trade losses amounting to £27,000, which causes Mr. Wodrow to exclaim: "It's a wonder to me how they pull throo."—*Ibid.* iii. 452.

[3] *Tour through Great Britain*, begun by Defoe, 1756, vol. iv.

[4] *New Stat. Acct. of Scotland*, vi. 231.

The method in which the early transactions of these trading ventures were conducted was a model of simplicity and self-protecting caution. The prudent shopkeepers bargained with those who supplied them with manufactures for sale, that they should not be paid till the vessels returned with their cargoes to Port Glasgow. By this ingenious arrangement, with which weavers and fish-curers were obliged to comply, they who furnished the goods ran most of the risk, while the astute traders got most of the profits, and paced the Trongate with easy mind till the ships they did not own, and the cargoes for which others had paid, returned safely home.

These vessels were usually hired from Whitehaven, for the citizens had no vessels of their own fit for long sea-voyages till 1718, when the first vessel owned by a Glasgow merchant crossed the Atlantic. Even up till 1735 the good citizens could only boast of fifteen vessels of their own, engaged in the Virginian trade. But activity increased year by year. Ships set forth with home manufactures, and returned laden with rich cargoes of colonial products. Glasgow became the source from which agents of the Farmers-General bought all the tobacco that entered France;[1] and in 1772 more than half of all the tobacco imported into the kingdom was brought to Glasgow, making these Virginia merchants the most prosperous men in Scotland.[2] Such were the rising fortunes of Glasgow: let us look at its social life, characteristic of the burghal ways of the century.

II

At the beginning of the century Glasgow, with its population of about 12,500 inhabitants, formed a small community with houses clustered within a few hundred yards of the Market Cross. "It has," says Captain Burt, who saw it in 1726, "a spacious carrefour where stands the cross, and going round it you have by turns the views of the four streets that in regular

[1] Forbes' *History of a Banking House.*

[2] In 1772 Glasgow imported no less than 49,000 out of the entire 90,000 hogsheads which were imported into the kingdom. Smollett states in *Humphrey Clinker* (1771) that Mr. John Glassford had twenty-five vessels engaged in the Virginia traffic with trade to half a million.

angles proceed from thence. The houses are faced with ashlar stone; they are well sashed, all of one model, and piazzas rise round them on either side, which gives a good air to the buildings. There are some handsome streets; but the extreme parts of the town are mean and disagreeable to the eye." The town seemed to him "the most uniform and prettiest" he had ever seen. All other visitors were impressed as favourably as this English engineer officer by the beauty and charm of the little city, so pleasantly situated by the green banks of the Clyde.[1] The first historian of Glasgow, in 1736, gives quite an idyllic picture of his town as "surrounded with cornfields, kitchen and flower gardens and beautiful orchards, abounding with fruits of all sorts, which, by reason of the open and large streets, send forth a pleasant, odoriferous smell."[2] Beside the substantial houses of the well-to-do citizens, with quaint picturesque Flemish architecture and crow-stepped gables, however, stood mean, dirty, and broken-down hovels to mar the beauty of the town; while in the streets stood middens, against which magistrates vainly objected,[3] and in the gutters remained garbage seriously to spoil the "odoriferous smell" of the fruit and flower-scented air.

The Trongate was the centre of life and business. Colonnades extended along the basement floors of the houses on both sides of the four principal streets that formed a cross, and under the shadow of the pillars supporting the piazzas were the small and dingy shops, entered by half doors, over which the merchants leaned waiting for customers or chatting with their neighbours. Inside, the wares were miscellaneous, though the choice was slender—shalloons and dried fish, yarn and candles, and brocades. The highest rent of these rooms, where the goods of the best Glasgow "merchants" or shopkeepers were sold, was, in 1712, only £5, while humbler warerooms were let at 12s. The price of these modest mercantile houses may be understood by the fact that two hundred and twenty shops were rented at a total sum of £623.[4]

[1] Burt's *Letters*, i. 22; Defoe's *Tour through Great Britain*, iv. 117 (8th edition); Morer's *Short Account of Scot.* 1702.

[2] M'Ure's *Hist. of Glasgow* (M'Vitie's edition), p. 122.

[3] Macgeorge's *Old Glasgow*, p. 266.

[4] *Curiosities of Glasgow Citizenship*, xi.

The dwelling-houses of the wealthiest class of citizens were chiefly in flats, entered by turnpike stairs, dark, narrow, and unsalubrious, for which the rent was merely £100 Scots, or £8 : 6 : 8 sterling. In Spreull's Land in the Trongate lived ten families on the "common stair," including three ladies of title—one being Lady Glencairn—in their respective "landings"; and their ladyships did not consider they paid too little for their dwellings when they gave the high rent of £10 a year.

Shops for provisions were not then to be found, and ladies set forth in the morning, wending their way cautiously in pattens over the mire and past the dunghills, to the booths and stalls in the road, after their servants had come back from filling their stoups and jugs at the public draw-wells, where they had waited with the crowd of other barefooted maidens for their turn.[1] Twice a week the small supply of flesh came for sale that was sufficient to supply their wants, because from Martinmas till May the only meat used was salted. And on the rare arrival of fresh meat in winter, the bellman went along the streets announcing the exciting fact.[2]

The ways of the town were simple, for trade, until nearly the middle of the century, made slow progress, and even those who were prosperous retained the old fashions of their fathers. At six o'clock in the morning a gun was fired, which intimated that the post-runner (and after 1717 the more expeditious post-horse) had arrived with letters from Edinburgh, and citizens set forth to the little shop where the merchant who acted for £12 a year as postmaster handed out the small supply of correspondence. Thereafter they returned to breakfast, and after a repast on porridge, herring, and ale, took their stand at the shop door, or their seat in the dingy little warehouse, till at half-past eleven the music-bells of the Tron played their pleasant tunes, which, like the St. Giles' bells of Edinburgh, were a signal for merchants and tradesmen to adjourn to their favourite taverns to drink their "meridian"

[1] "There is plenty of water," says M'Ure in 1736, "there being several water wells in several closses of the toun, besides sixteen public wells which serve the city night and day as need requires."—*History of Glasgow.*

[2] Strang's *Clubs*, p. 13; Macgeorge's *Old Glasgow*, p. 293.

of ale or brandy—an operation which, the liquor being served in a pewter tankard, was popularly styled "pewthering." At mid-day, or one o'clock, having turned the key and shut up their shops, they dined on the inevitable broth and salt beef, or the boiled fowls, bought by the lady near the Cross that morning for threepence each. Dinner over, with its beverage of ale or "twopenny," the doors of shop and wareroom were reopened till eight o'clock, when the citizens, having finished business for the day, in companies of four or five, resorted to the little tavern rooms, where they drank and gossiped, and discussed the prices of serges, the weft and warp of fine lawn, the arrival of a vessel at Port Glasgow with fir deals from Sweden, or the chances of sale of tallow with Norway. By nine o'clock, however, they usually returned home to supper, to family worship, and to bed.[1]

Very frugal and plain were the modes of living in those early days, and the ways of private folk and public functionaries were extremely unpretentious. When affairs commercially were "looking up," a careful liberality was displayed, and the Town Council in 1720 were even induced to requite the Lord Provost's services in a rising city by allowing him a salary of £20 sterling, "because the chief magistrate whiles in that station is obligt to keep a post suitable thereto, and cannot but be at considerable charge in furnishing his house with wine for the entertainment of gentlemen who may have occasion to wait upon him at his house."[2] It was in the same spirit of municipal munificence distinguishing these bailies that they occasionally sent a gift of local products or imports to legal and political friends of the city. Thus they now and then sent by the carrier a barrel of herring to advocates who had served in pleas at the Parliament House, or the handsome award, in the beginning of the century, of 4 lbs. of tobacco to the "town's friend in Edinburgh"—at a cost to the city of 4s. 3d. sterling. On the same economical scale as civic affairs was the private life of gentlemen conducted.[3] They entertained little, and seldom gave dinners, except to English riders

[1] Strang's *Clubs of Glasgow, passim; New Stat. Acct. of Scotland;* Bannatyne's *Reminiscences*, vi. 230.

[2] Macgeorge's *Old Glasgow*, p. 223.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 237.

or bagmen, or to their kith and kin in homely gatherings at supper at New Year.

While the men had their meetings with friends at the taverns, ladies had their quieter assemblies at home, where, after 1725, tea became the fashionable beverage. At the "four hours" visitors dropped in, were received in the bedroom, and partook of the tea out of the precious and fragile cups, the treasured china of the hostess, who with delicate handling washed them as the door closed behind the last departed guest. Parties could not be large in those flats, consisting of four or five small rooms, with their little windows that let in meagre light, though, being ill-sashed—if sashed at all—they let in ample draughts of air. The family lived in the main bedroom. There they had their meals; there they received their visitors. Only when special company was expected was the one unaired and seldom-used public room prepared.[1] This was the ordinary style of living even of very prosperous merchants, although a somewhat more luxurious mode was adopted by those wealthier gentlemen who were making large fortunes in the Virginia trade, and had handsome mansions with the "odoriferous" gardens and orchards, lauded by worthy M'Ure, the town historian, such as stood on the spot now covered by St. Enoch's Square.

The houses being so incommodious, professional men could not conveniently see their clients and patients at home, and merchants could not in their crowded little shops or warerooms transact business with their customers. It was, therefore, to the coffee-houses or taverns that they resorted, where they could bargain and barter, talk and consult. There patients met the chirurgeons and got advice as to the potions, vomitories, and gargarisms they should take; there clients saw the lawyers, and over their ale or wine made their testament or drew up a Memorial to their "Lordships" in Edinburgh; and there merchants arranged with country tradesmen their supply of serges. Every transaction was carried out with the accompaniment of ale or brandy, or a chopin of claret. Pious and well ordered, as befitted such a religious district, the citizens would sanctify their drams by saying a grace over them, and a minister, if

[1] *New Stat. Acct. of Scotland*, vi. 230.

present, would be respectfully asked to "ask a blessing" or "say a few words," which he did at considerable length before they partook of a tin of ale or mutchkin of claret. This was the proper preliminary to selling a horse or a supply of Kilmarnock bonnets.[1]

III

Speaking of Glasgow society as he remembered it in his student days, in 1746, and speaking somewhat superciliously, Dr. Alexander Carlyle says: "There were only a few families of ancient citizens pretending to be gentlemen, and a few others who were recent settlers there who had obtained wealth and consideration in trade. The rest were shopkeepers and mechanics and successful pedlars, who occupied large ware-rooms full of manufactures of all sorts to furnish a cargo for Virginia. Their manner of life was coarse and vulgar."[2] They certainly were simple and provincial, and the fashions of far-off London and their echoes from aristocratic Edinburgh rarely travelled to the banks of the Clyde. Unpretentiously its young ladies went to schools for learning the art of spinning flax, fine yarn, and making cambric. Like explorers in a strange realm of science, they attended the lessons of the distinguished teacher who advertised himself in 1740 as having been "regularly educated under His Majesty's cook," and able to teach the "art of making pastry, confectionary, candying, pickling, and of making sillabubs, gellies, and broath of all sorts, and also of dressing and ordering a table." Doubtless it was because the magistrates were longing for a change from the perpetual and depressing sameness in their home fare that they allowed this culinary artist from Buckingham Palace £10 yearly "during pleasure." The results were not conspicuous for success.

Literature was not a matter of widespread interest in this trading community, although under the eye of the learned professors of the University—that venerable building in the High Street, with its grim grey-stoned quadrangles. Books

[1] Strang's *Clubs of Glasgow*, p. 102.
[2] Carlyle's *Autobiography*, p. 74.

were few, and they were sold in little shops, dealing chiefly in chap-books, sealing-wax, stationery, and fishing-rods, exposed at the window beside poor college classics in gray pasteboard covers, devout works such as the *Balm of Gilead*, Rutherford's *Letters*, Boston's *Fourfold State*, and Gray's *Sermons*—books which Glasgow publishers were always reprinting, for the people dearly loved to read them. The few men of reading could get their books by the cadger from Edinburgh, or by boat from London *via* Bo'ness, or from Robert Foulis after he set up selling books in 1741. Art was far from the thoughts and taste of this society, engrossed in selling tobacco, fingrams, shoes and linen. And when the brothers Foulis started their Academy for the furthering of the Fine Arts, only three merchants lent them money for a fantastic scheme which, they knew, could bring no profits to their till. Citizens travelled as little in those days as they read, for means of journeying were few and expensive. Not till 1749 did a stage-coach begin to run over the ill-kept road to Edinburgh twice a week, occupying twelve hours on the way, for which a charge of 9s. was made; though a less pretentious caravan could bear them slowly along on springless wheels for 5s. only.

The city had a reputation for sanctity to keep up. The covenanting spirit had ever been keenest in the West country; its sturdiest upholders had been the westland Whigs; and western mobs had no more delightful and conscientious pursuit than to raid an Episcopal meeting-house or to chivvy its minister. In 1712 richly it enjoyed hustling "Amen" Cockburn and his wife from their home because the curate read prayers at funerals in a black gown, till they fled the town in terror. With highly approved promptitude did the magistrates in 1728 silence a nonjuring minister who "prays not for the king," and had set up to preach in a private house "closs opposit to the colledge." He vanished at once upon a threat of six months' imprisonment, and the town was purged again of Prelacy.[1]

Simultaneously with the apparition of the Episcopal preacher was the appearance of Tony Ashton and his strollers—two

[1] Wodrow's *Analecta*, ii. 247, iv. 9.

iniquities in one month, which, as Wodrow reflects, is "pretty singular." The players held their performances; but it was felt a godly consolation that they "did not make so much as to pay their musick." Theatrical entertainments always aroused popular indignation in the West. The weavers destroyed the wooden booth in which Love, Digges, and Mrs. Ward intended to appear one night in 1752. Twelve years later no site would scrupulous citizens let within the royal bounds for a playhouse, and a crowd set fire to the temporary erection in which Mrs. Bellamy was to act. That there was, however, a worldly as well as godly section in the community is proved by the fact that, her wardrobe having been burnt, from her admirers forty gowns were sent to the great actress.[1]

Hand in hand did ministers, elders, and magistrates walk together in fraternal zeal for piety. Whatever the Kirk-Session desired in the way of discipline the Town Council enforced by penalties. Vigilance unremitting was exercised on the outgoings and incomings of the people. To secure proper observance of the Sabbath, compurgators, or "bum-bailies," patrolled the streets and wynds on Saturday night to see that by ten o'clock all folk were quietly at home; and if incautious sounds betokening untimely revelry issued from behind a door, or a stream of light from chinks of a window-shutter betrayed a jovial company within, they entered and broke up the party which dared to be happy so near the Lord's own day. On Sabbath, as in other towns, the seizers, or elders, in their turn perambulated the streets during divine service, and visited the Green in the evening, haling all "vaguers" to kirk or session.[2] The profound stillness of the Sabbath was preternatural, except when the multitudinous tramp of heavy shoes came from a vast voiceless throng of churchgoers. In these streets of which the patrols "made a solitude and called it peace," at all other hours no persons passed, no sound was heard, no dog dared bark. In the mirk

[1] Denholm's *Hist. of Glasgow*, p. 342; Jackson's *Hist. of Scottish Stage*, pp. 97, 102.

[2] This tyrannical practice was continued till 1780, when a city magnate was taken into custody for walking on the Green, whereupon he raised and gained an action for damages at the Court of Session. The ancient institution was thus mercifully removed.—*New Stat. Acct. of Scot.* vi. 231.

Sabbath nights no lamp was lit, because all but profane persons were engaged in solemn exercises at home. During the day the window-shutters were, in strict households, just opened enough to let inmates see to walk about the room, or to read the Bible by sitting close to the window-panes.

There were "praying societies" also, which became more numerous and intense after the Cambuslang "Wark" of 1742. Companies of twenty or thirty of the devout met together; they bewailed the wickedness and profligacy of the age, and they profusely prayed for the overcoming of Satan.[1] Most of the city ministers were of the fanatical high-flying party in the Church; certainly they did not favourably impress young Wolfe, then stationed in Glasgow with his detachment of soldiers. A well-disposed man, this young officer frequented the kirk; but he writes in 1749 to his mother describing them as "excessive blockheads, so truly and obstinately dull that they shut out knowledge at every entrance."[2] It was such a community that, even so late as 1764, Professor Reid, fresh from Aberdeen University, condemned as "Bœotian in their understanding, fanatical in their religion, and clownish in their dress and manners."[3] Science might have suffered severely if the petty piety of the day had always caught its transgressors. It was lucky or providential that the "seizers" did not catch James Watt, when one eventful Sunday afternoon in the spring of 1765 he walked on the forbidden Green thinking over his unborn engine, and "just as he got to the herd's house" the "idea of a steam condenser flashed upon his mind." One hesitates to think what disastrous effect the interruption of a "bum-bailie" might have had on the invention of steam-engines, and on the industry and science of the future.[4]

Whether from natural sedateness or from the wholesome

[1] *Diary of George Brown, Merchant*, 1743-1752, private circulation.

[2] Wright's *Life of General Wolfe*. In 1753 Wolfe writes: "The inhabitants retain still all the religion they ever had, I daresay with less ostentation and mockery of devotion, for which they are justly remarkable" (p. 128).

[3] Reid's *Works*, edited by Hamilton, p. 41.

[4] Smiles' *Lives of Boulton and Watt*, chap. iv. An English traveller in 1770 observes that "the inhabitants have been remarkable for their strictness in attending to the public and private worship of God, so that going past their doors of an evening you may hear so many singing psalms that you are apt to imagine yourself in church."—Spencer's *Complete English Traveller*, p. 599.

influences of piety, the people were a well-ordered folk, and crime was almost unknown. Sobriety was then the characteristic of the race. In 1764 Professor Reid could still picture the morals of the city in favourable terms: "Though their religion is of a gloomy and enthusiastic cast, it makes them tame and sober. I have not heard either of a house or a head broken, of a pocket picked or any flagrant crime, since I came here. I have not heard any swearing in the streets, nor even seen a man drunk (excepting, *inter nos,* one professor) since I came."[1] This remarkable quietude and propriety, to whatever cause it might be due, could not be attributed to the vigilance and efficiency of the police at any rate. The whole town's safety and order were entrusted to the unpaid and reluctant burghers who were called on to act as city guard, and possessed all the irregularity and effeteness of amateur performers. Every citizen who was between the years of eighteen and sixty and paid a yearly rent amounting to £3 annually (a rule in those days which made the guard rather exclusive) was required to take his turn at the duty. On tuck of drum the gentleman was at his post at ten o'clock at night, and strolled with weary tread and yawning gait along the Trongate and High Street, and up the pitch-dark lanes of winter nights, where not a lamp was burning, till three or four o'clock in the morning. After that hour, in the obscure and unprotected mornings, the city was without a police, and the tired and hungry guardians of the peace were snug and snoring in their box-beds.[2] The better to secure order in the burgh, all young men and women and servants were strictly forbidden to be in the streets "under cloud of nights" in companies, and all strangers staying either in private or in public houses were obliged to give in their names by ten o'clock at night to the captain of the city guard.[3]

In this way were affairs conducted with perfect simplicity

[1] Reid's *Works*, edited by Hamilton, 1863, p. 40.

[2] In 1788 a small police force—at an annual cost of £135—was associated with the citizens in public duty.—Macgeorge's *Old Glasgow*, p. 292.

[3] On "Saturnsday, 7th Dec. 1745," a city merchant of great piety records in his Diary: "Read the fourteenth chapter of Corinthians; then went to keep the city guard at ten o'clock at night, where I continued till near four in the morning, when I went to bed."—*Diary of George Brown*, p. 41.

in those guileless days. Up to 1750 the city may be said to have been unlighted,[1] for the few smoky tallow-candle lamps which flickered here and there at long intervals only served to intensify the gloom rather than to relieve it, and cautious citizens required till 1780 to light themselves in the darkness by carrying "bowats" or lanthorns in their hands,[2] while ladies in their pattens were accompanied, like the timorous Bailie Nicol Jarvie, along the Saltmarket by their maid bearing the flickering lamp. There were no hackney coaches then, and only a few sedan-chairs, to convey old ladies to the kirk or young ladies with spacious hoops to the dance. Unpaved, uncausewayed, the streets even till near the end of the century were rugged and filthy, full of ruts in dry weather and of mire in wet, while the city, growing with its population in wealth, was satisfied to leave the maintenance and cleansing of "streets, causeways, vennels, and lanes, the highways and roads, within and about the city, and territories thereof," to the labour of only two men.[3]

IV

In the middle of the century there appeared distinct signs of social improvement, enterprise, and luxury. The city had now about 19,000 inhabitants. Hitherto the shopkeeper supplied miscellaneously shoes, lanterns, stay-laces, or silks; the merchant could accommodate customers with wedding rings and the best green tea. But the social fashions of the world were beginning to invade Glasgow, and the inhabitants were full of interest when a shoemaker, a silversmith, and a haberdasher opened their shops in the Trongate in 1750, and ladies, instead of waiting for the carrier from Edinburgh to bring special articles, could now put on their pattens and go across to the new shop. There were now mantua-makers,

[1] In 1780 the magistrates agreed to put up nine lamps on the south side of the Trongate on condition that the proprietors laid a foot pavement.—Macgregor's *Hist. of Glasgow*, p. 290.

[2] *New Stat. Acct. Scot.* vi. 232; Macgeorge's *Old Glasgow*, p. 290; Carlyle's *Autobiography*, p. 75.

[3] In 1777 the Council enacted that "a third person should be employed along with the said two men."—Macgeorge's *Old Glasgow*, p. 292.

who made cloaks for the living and "dressed dead corpses"; who sold "dead flannels" for the deceased and burial crapes for the survivors, after the newest Edinburgh style.[1]

Soon thereafter the walls of the shops broke out into an eruption of signboards, and there dangled and creaked in the air from poles, red lions and blue swans, cross keys, golden fleeces, golden breeches, golden gloves, till the magistrates, in course of time, ordered their removal, as obscuring the light of their new lamps at night. But amid all these signs of progress the city was unconscious that there was living in it one who was to promote the trade and commerce of the West more than the whole band of merchants and tobacco-lords put together.[2] James Watt had come from Greenock in 1754 and sought employment in the little shop of a mechanic who called himself an "optician," because he mended and sold spectacles, fiddles, fishing-rods and tackle; and after a brief sojourn in London in 1756 he returned to Glasgow, where the Corporation of Hammermen refused to allow him to set up business, because he was neither the son of a burgess nor the apprentice to a citizen. The College professors, however, sensible of his rare capacity, had allowed the young mechanic to have his workshop in their precincts, and there, to eke out a living, he made and repaired any article his customers wanted. Though hardly knowing one tune from another, he mended fiddles, flutes, and guitars, as well as spectacles and quadrants; while his shop was frequented by students who lent him books, and by professors like Robert Simson, Adam Smith, Cullen, and Black, discussing with him scientific questions as he wrought at his trade. Near him in the quadrangle was the book and printing-shop of the admirable brothers Foulis, who sold new books in their shop and old books by auction, and printed the classics and works of poets in magnificent type and with rare accuracy of text, to delight the hearts of scholars and book-lovers. This

[1] Strang's *Clubs*, p. 71. An advertisement in 1747 announces: "James Hodge continues to sell burial crapes ready made, and his wife's niece who lives with him dresses dead corpses at as cheap a rate as was formerly done by her aunt, having been educated by her and perfected at Edinburgh, from whence she has lately arrived, and has brought with her all the newest and best fashions." —Macgeorge's *Old Glasgow*, p. 152.

[2] Smiles' *Lives of Boulton and Watt.*

was the haunt of all who valued literature, good talk, and pleasant company.[1]

As the age of religious tyranny died out, the genial qualities of the people crept out into light. In the city there were clubs bearing fantastic titles for all classes of men—men of letters, doctors, merchants. Professor Robert Simson, the great mathematician, Dr. Moore, the literary physician, Dr. Cullen, Adam Smith, were allured from their abodes as readily as jovial tradesmen to their favourite taverns, where they could have their much-loved banquets on hen-broth, composed of two or three howtowdies (*Anglicè*, fowls), black beans, a haggis, a crab-pie, with ample punch. Taverns at night resounded with lively songs and with the easily provoked mirth of citizens whose ideal of humour is that quality called "jocosity"—apparently so delightful to the circle in which it originates, and so incomprehensible to those who are outside. By 1753, evidently, customs had much changed from the austere past, for Wolfe writes home: "We have plays, concerts, and balls, public and private, with dinners and suppers of the most execrable food on earth, and wine that approaches to poison. The men drink till they are excessively drunk." So speaks the typical English tourist. Dancing assemblies attracted the whole rank and fashion from the West; daughters and sons of ancient county families came by coach or on horseback from their country mansions to balls that began at five o'clock and lasted till eleven, mingling with a touch of condescension with the new families of prosperous merchants, who were in time to buy their ancestral acres from their impecunious fathers. Social customs were not always perfectly refined; for even in later days, when assemblies began at eight o'clock, the regulations request that "gentlemen do not appear in their boots," and that they "leave their sticks at the bar."

Fashion at its best and fullest and fairest was seen on the Green by the river banks on fine evenings, where moved an animated throng—ladies in hoops and silks and powder and long green fans, and men in bright-coloured coats and scarlet waistcoats and powdered hair, whose clothes did not—though their manners might—suggest the stockings, tar, and consign-

[1] *Literary Notices of Glasgow* (Maitland Club).

ments of red-herring that they handled in the shop and warehouse an hour before.

By 1760 wealth had grown apace; the cargoes of rum and tobacco from Virginia and Maryland and the West Indies were bringing fortunes to traders. These men formed a distinct caste by themselves. Magnates of the city, arbiters of fortune, leaders of society, those aristocrats of the Saltmarket, gave themselves airs of supreme importance. "Pride in their port," they regarded their fellow-townsmen as utterly inferior, although they or their fathers had themselves sold dried herring or "wicked candles" in a shop beneath the Trongate pillars. On the "plainstones"—the only pavement then in Glasgow—in the middle of the street fronting the Trongate piazza, those Virginia traders—known as tobacco-lords—strutted in business hours, clad in scarlet cloaks, cocked hats, and powdered wigs, bearing with portly grace gold-headed canes in their hands. On "the top of the causeway," which they arrogated to themselves, and which citizens obsequiously conceded, they might be accosted by a city minister, a doctor, or a professor from the University, without giving rebuff; but for others of lower trade to come "between the wind and their nobility" was a liberty not to be permitted, and for common feet to tread these stones was sacrilege. If a shopkeeper wished to confer with a Virginia merchant, he did not venture to come up to speak to him, but stood at the side of the street or in the gutter, meekly waiting to catch the great man's eye and deferentially indicate his desire to speak to his tobacco-lordship. A world of subtle difference lay between a tradesman and a trader.[1] They certainly were prosperous, these men; yet many of them lived till near the close of the century in flats, and there at a rental of £6 to £12 a year. The wealthier men occupied fine mansions, near the busy old streets, inside iron railings and walls, which enclosed gardens and orchards, which have long been covered with densely populated thoroughfares and dull warehouses. Large fortunes were acquired by them, good marriages were made, and fine estates were bought. Everything seemed in their favour till the American war in 1776 broke out and ruined the great

[1] *Glasgow Past and Present.*

Virginia trade. Disastrous failures followed, princely fortunes were lost, and many who had dominated society for thirty or forty years had to struggle on with small incomes and to sink into obscurity.[1] Other trades took their place. Sugar from the West Indies, cotton for the mills, calico printing, muslin weaving, and cotton spinning, were employing thousands, and manufactures all around the city brought new wealth to new men, and fortunes were not found only in a small set, but diffused widely: the old exclusiveness of society disappeared, and time-honoured distinctions and purse-proud prejudices passed away that had severed foreign merchants and home manufacturers and tradesmen into distinct ranks.[2]

V

Other social changes came as the town developed, till in 1790 town and suburb had gained a population of sixty-two thousand; as new lines of handsome streets spread over the green fields, as rich families moved from the small flats of their youth to "self-contained" houses, and closer and more frequent communication brought them in contact with the outside world.[3] Shops arose to suit every taste and supply every want. Sedan-chairs began to give place to hackney coaches; no longer when rain fell with local fluency did everybody rush for shelter in the stair "closes"; but from the year 1783, when a Glasgow doctor displayed for the first time a yellow umbrella which he brought from Paris, there were seen everywhere the bulky rain-proof implements of yellow and green glazed linen. There was more air of luxury, though the dinners were still of one course. The hour for repast had advanced to two, and after 1770 in some high circles to three o'clock. It was not, however, till 1786 that a lady of light and leading, imitating the ways of Edinburgh,

[1] "After the American war was over the tobacco trade never regained its old dimensions in Scotland, for the States on gaining independence largely exported the tobacco of Virginia and Maryland direct to the different markets of Europe." —Bruce's *Report on the Union*, Appendix, p. 692.

[2] Denholm's *Hist.* p. 429; *Glasgow Past and Present*, v. 2-4.

[3] The rents of dwelling-houses in flats about 1780 ranged from £6 to £12; shops and booths from £10 to £20.—Strang's *Clubs*, p. 91.

gave her guests dinner in two courses—an innovation which was regarded as gross extravagance, although it was meekly explained by the offender that she only divided the meal into two and presented no more dishes in two courses than others put down in one.[1] Society had its tea-parties, where the company met at five o'clock, played cards till nine, when they supped; and then, as the ladies withdrew to bed or to the drawing-room, the host and his friends drank their punch, or claret; and bowl followed bowl and toast followed toast till the small hours of morning. About this period, when the century was far advanced, moral and religious changes for the worse had come into vogue. Sedate men deplored, after 1770, that men swore terribly who aimed at fashion—uttering oaths that had come from London *via* Edinburgh, though spoken with the stronger accent of the West; there also came a habit of drinking, less restrainedly than of old, amongst all classes, and men of society were often mighty drinkers under too hospitable roofs, where servants were in waiting to loose the cravats of recumbent and unconscious guests.[2] With these symptoms of moral disruption there was ominous laxity in church observance. Of old every pew had been full, and collections for the poor large; now the seats were often sadly empty, and the "plate" at the kirk door was slenderly filled. It is true that these relaxations of piety and prudence were temporary phases of society in Scotland, and that when the next century came, the city resumed much of its former sobriety, and settled down to quiet ways again. But it was no longer the small, homely, provincial old town—Glasgow of 1707, with its population of 12,500, had changed beyond all recognition in 1800 into a city of nearly 80,000 people, with its streets, containing handsome mansions, covering vast spaces that a few years before were cornfields and orchards; and changing the fashionable residences of the olden time into the dingy warehouses of the new and prosperous age.[3]

[1] *New Stat. Acct. Scot.* vi. 230 (Dugald Bannatyne's *Recollections*).

[2] *New Stat. Acct.* vi. 232; Strang's *Clubs of Glasgow.*

[3] Population of Glasgow in 1660, 14,678; in 1708, 12,766; in 1740, 17,043; 1763, 28,300; 1780, 42,833; 1791, 66,575; in 1801, 77,385. Rental in 1712, £7840; in 1803, £81,484.—Macgregor's *Hist. of Glasgow*, p. 531; Denholm's *Hist. of Glasgow*, p. 230.

CHAPTER V

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

1700–1750

I

THE eighteenth century opened in Scotland with dark and dismal prospects. From one end of the country to the other the poorer classes of its population of above a million were in misery, hunger, and in the shadow of death. The seasons since August 1696 had been seasons of blight and famine, and the memory of these "dark years," these "ill," or "hungry years," as they were significantly called—or "King William's years," as some Jacobites styled them—lingered in the people's minds for generations. During these disastrous times the crops were blighted by easterly "haars" or mists, by sunless, drenching summers, by storms, and by early bitter frosts and deep snow in autumn. For seven years this calamitous weather continued—the corn rarely ripening, and the green, withered grain being shorn in December amidst pouring rain or pelting snow-storms. Even in the months of January and February, in some districts many of the starving people were still trying to reap the remains of their ruined crops of oats, blighted by the frosts, and perished from weakness, cold, and hunger. The sheep and oxen died in thousands, the prices of everything among a peasantry that had nothing went up to famine pitch, and a large proportion of the population in rural districts was destroyed by disease and want. During these "hungry years," as starvation stared the people in the face, the instincts of self-preservation overpowered all other feelings,

and even natural affection became extinct in crowds of men and women forced to prowl and fight for their food like beasts. People in the North sold their children to slavery in the plantations for victuals; men struggled with their sisters for a morsel of bread; many were so weak and dispirited that they had neither heart nor strength to bury their dead. A man was seen carrying the corpse of his father on his back half way to the churchyard, and throwing it down at a farmer's door, he exclaimed, "I can carry it no farther. For God's sake bury the corpse, or put it, if you like, on the dyke of your kailyard to keep out the sheep."[1] On the roads were to be seen dead bodies with a morsel of raw flesh in their mouths, and dying mothers lying with starved infants which had sucked dry breasts; while numbers, dreading lest their bodies should be exposed to the birds, crawled, when they felt the approach of death, to the kirkyard, that they might have some better chance of being buried when death overtook them. In these very churchyards, which, owing to their too abundant replenishing, were the only fertile spots in the land, old and young struggled together for the nettles, docks, and grass in spring; while they gathered greedily the loathed snails in summer and stored them for the winter's use.[2] Even in the streets of towns starving men fell down and died.[3] "Through the long continuance of these manifold judgments," says the pious, credulous, ungrammatical, but quite veracious historian, Patrick Walker,[4] "deaths and burials were so common that the living wearied of the burying of the dead. I have seen corpses drawn on sleds, many neither having coffins nor winding-sheets. I was one of four who carried the corpse of a young woman a mile of way, and when we came to the grave an honest man came and said, 'You must go and help me to bury my son; he is lien dead these two days; otherwise I will be obliged to bury him in my own yard.' We went, and there were eight of us had two miles to carry the corpse of

[1] *Stat. Acct. Scotland*, vi. 18, Monquhidder, Kilmuir-Easter, Kilsyth. The people in their eagerness eat the corn grains raw.—Fletcher's *Second Discourse;* Stewart's *Sketches of Highlands*, i.

[2] *Stat. Acct.*, West Linton, i. 145.

[3] Kennedy's *Annals of Aberdeen*, i. 272.

[4] *Biograph. Presbyteriana*, ii. 24.

this young man, many neighbours looking on, but none to help. I was credibly informed that in the north two sisters on a Monday's morning were found carrying the corpse of their brother with bearing ropes, none offering to help. I have seen some walking about till the sun-setting, and to-morrow about 6 o'clock in the summer's morning found dead, their head lying on their hands, and mice and rats having eaten a great part of their hands and arms." These grimly vivid memories gain ample confirmation from records of the time and traditions of the people that survived for generations.[1]

In the earlier part of the century, when the poor were not interred in coffins, they were only carried to the grave in the parish coffin; and in those "dark years" the bottom of the public "kist" was on hinges to allow of the bodies being dropped more expeditiously into the shallow graves.[2] Records of Kirk-Sessions shed their grim light upon those sad days, and such an entry as this from Cullen Records makes the past vivid:—"1699, 8th May: George Stevenson, offischer, for making poor folk's graves, 14s. 6d. [Scots, or 1s. 2½d. sterling]. 19th July: Given to the bedall for burying severall poor objects who died of the famine and brought dead to the churchyard, 15s. 7th August: Given to the officer for burying some poor objects dyed through scarcity, 6s."[3] Often there

[1] "1699.—A complaint given by the elders against the generalitie of the people that they are become so inhuman and unchristian as would not so much as help to the churchyard with the dead bodies of poor persons who are daylie dying before them, being invited thereto; which scandal and unchristianitie the minister did sharply reprehend from the pulpit, holding out the danger of persistence (which God in His mercy prevent), and warning them that those who refused to attend a buriall would not only be lyable to Church censure, but punishment through civill magistrates" (Session Records of Drumoak).—Henderson's *Upper Deeside*, p. 102. In 1699 pulpit intimations from Commissioners of Supply to all persons to bury the "corps of the poor timously under failzie of 20s. to those persons adjacent to where they dye."—Cramond's *Church of Deskford*.

[2] In ill years many buried only in winding-sheets, for which the Session gives 1s. 6d. Scots.—Cramond's *Presby. of Fordyce*, p. 30.

[3] Carruthers' *Highland Note-Book*: "A maiden lady in Garmouth, Morayshire, whose name is still gratefully embalmed in traditional recollections of the peasantry, provided shrouds for such as wandered to her door to die; and so anxious were the poor to avail themselves of this last privilege, that they journeyed far and near that they might be secure of decent interment" (p. 165).—Cramond's *Hist. of Cullen*, p. 138.

was no time and no people to carry the corpses, which were buried together in great holes. Of those who survived the horrors of starvation, many "poor objects" died of the diseases which hunger had engendered.

The scenes of continuous misery roused the ever alert superstitious feelings of the people, who, of course, discerned in the misty springs, the sunless summers, the disastrous autumns, and pitiless winters, with their prolonged intense frosts and deep snows, tokens of divine wrath on a backsliding generation;[1] and with vigilant piety they found special evidence of God's judgment in the miseries which overtook those families in low-lying fertile districts who had raised the price of provisions, and were therefore regarded as carrion crows who had fattened on the poor. Imaginative memories could recall the prophetic utterances of covenanting leaders, which were invested with those circumstantial details with which people always adorn inspired words remembered after the events. Had not godly Donald Cargill, as he stood upon the green braes of Upper Bankside, in Clydesdale, in May, 1661,[2] not only foretold his own fate, but also prophesied to his awe-struck congregation: "You shall see cleanness of teeth and many a pale blue face which shall put thousands to their graves in Scotland with unheard of natures of fluxes and fevers and otherwise, and there shall be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people"? Did not the sainted Master Richard Peden[3] foretell like troubles when he proclaimed that "so long as the lads are on the hills and in glens and caves"—that is, so long as the persecution lasted—"you will have bannocks o'er night; but if ever they are beneath the beild of the brae you will have clean teeth and many a black pale face in Scotland"? None dared to doubt the inspiration and authenticity of such portentous prophecies as these.

[1] Bad seasons were invariably regarded as God's judgments. "Drumoak, 1689, March 24.—In respect of the coldness and prodigious frostiness and unkyndliness of the season of the year the minister preached from Micah vi. 9. 1709, June 5.—Fast intimated for the unseasonable coldness of the weather and the great loss of flocks and catell, and many spiritual plagues in all ranks."—Henderson's *Upper Deeside*, p. 99.

[2] Walker's, *Biog. Presby.* ii. 24.

[3] Wodrow's *Analecta.*

At the height of the scarcity the Privy Council allowed foreign grain to enter free into the ports, while exportation of grain was prohibited under heavy penalty—which was surely a superfluous order. Officers searched out all stored supplies and exposed them at fixed prices. Commissioners of Supply ordained the maximum charges for all grain in 1699, fixing £17 Scots (28s. sterling) a boll for wheat, and 16s. 6d. Scots for each half stone of oatmeal.[1] Every owner of grain was forced, under pain of forfeiture of his whole stock, to thresh all the grain in his girnels—not to sell even a peck as it was conveyed along the roads. Yet with hungry eyes the folk saw the food exposed in the market at prices they could not pay. "I have seen," says Patrick Walker,[2] "when meal was sold in markets women clapping their hands and tearing the clothes off their heads, crying, 'How shall we go home and see our children die of hunger?'"

Fierce denunciations were uttered by the clergy, and severe punishment was dealt by the magistrates on all forestallers,[3] whose conduct was regarded with utter horror by an age possessed of very erroneous notions of political economy, but possessed of very accurate opinions of human nature. Edicts were read from pulpits and proclaimed at market-crosses stating the maximum sums at which grain was to be sold, on pain of prosecution as "occurrers" or usurers. Such men were looked on with detestation by the people, and stories were told long after of farmers who had kept their meal rotting till it rose to famine price, and had sent to prison famishing children for taking kail out of their yards, and were themselves by divine judgment reduced to destitution, and forced to beg for meat at the doors of those they had left to starve. To mitigate the distress, the Church appointed days of fast and humiliation "because of Sabbath breaking, drunkenness, and the general and particular iniquities which had brought this divine wrath on the land," and with much more practical purpose they recommended "cheerful and liberal" collections for the indigent in every parish. But, unfortunately, those

[1] In Cromarty oats, which in good years cost 5s., rose to 54s.—Sir J. Sinclair's *Agric. of Northern Counties*, p. 8.

[2] *Biog. Presby.* ii. 27.

[3] *Annals of Hawick*, p. 107.

who were told to give "cheerfully and liberally" were themselves "indigent"; the incomes of the lairds depended on the grain, the loss of which had impoverished themselves as well as the people.

It was in the midst of this period of distress, in 1698, that Fletcher of Salton described the woeful state of the land: two hundred thousand vagrants "begging from door to door, half of these belonging to the wild, brutalised, savage race of nomads, the other half families whom poverty and famine had driven to want, while thousands of our people are at this day dying for want of food." So disastrous were those "ill years" to the rural population,[1] that it is related of parishes in Mid-Lothian that 300 out of 900 persons died; of parishes in the North that out of sixteen families on one farm no fewer than thirteen perished; of an estate which gave work to 119 persons that only three families (including the proprietor's) survived; of districts once well populated that "not a smoke remained"; and villages disappeared into ruins.[2] Many parishes were reduced to a half or even a third of their former inhabitants. The consequences of these "dark years" were far-reaching and long lasting.

The land had not recovered from its troubles when the terrible famine of 1709 came to bring ruin on farmers and starvation to the people—the crops and cattle destroyed by continuous disastrous weather. To counteract the cupidity of forestallers, all owners of grain were ordered to bring it without reserve to the market on a certain day, on which the Edinburgh magistrates commanded it to be sold in quantities not exceeding a firlot at 12s. Scots a peck, and

[1] Sir William Menzies, who farmed the Excise of Scotland at this period, had fallen into large arrears (£60,000) to the Government. He was prosecuted for payment by the Privy Council. He exonerated himself by pleading that famine arising from natural causes or the hand of God superseded all contracts, and in support of his plea undertook to prove that from 1697 to 1705 the crops were inadequate to the support of the people; that several thousands of the poor had actually perished of starvation; that as many more had emigrated, and that multitudes were compelled to have recourse to unnatural food, such as wild spinage, snails, etc.—Somerville's *Own Life*, p. 305.

[2] Walker's *Biog. Presbyter.*; *Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Duthill, iv. 316, Kilmuir-Easter, vi. 190. "In parish of Kininvie only three smoking cottages were left."—Carruther's *Highland Note-Book*, p. 164.

Town Councils in other towns tried to meet the necessities of the people by fixing the prices within their jurisdiction.[1] The result of these dearths was that great tracts of country formerly under cultivation were soon covered with heather, as if they had never been under the plough, not to be reclaimed for eighty years after. As the tenants had been driven to destitution and landlords to debt, there were no means of replenishing deserted farms or money to rent them, although landlords in their despair offered a team of oxen or milk cows to induce men to take the ground. In Aberdeenshire many who quitted their crofts entered into the stocking factories, crowds quitted the country; many left Ayrshire and Galloway for Ireland; while beggars swarmed in every town and village.[2]

II

The country presented in those days little that was picturesque to the eye of the English traveller as he rode precariously by the roads that were but ill-made tracks on which his horse could barely keep its footing, or the traveller keep his seat, with his swinging, lurching, leathern saddle-bags. It was treeless and bare; the land was marshy and full of bogs; instead of meadows with flocks feeding were wild moors stretching far and wide on the rising ground, and here and there a patch of soil rescued from the waste, on which lumbered teams of eight or ten oxen tethered to an uncouth plough. But what struck him most was the sight of huge yokes of oxen dragging the plough far up the steep hillsides in almost inaccessible places; and on his asking why? he learnt that the farmer was obliged to till the dry, steep braes because the ground below was hopelessly swampy.[3] In later times, ignorant of this simple reason, persons who observed on high

[1] "1709.—Wheat had advanced to £12 : 10s. Scots (£1 : 0 : 10) per boll, and the bakers were authorised in Glasgow to reduce the weight of bread of the 12 penny loaf to 8 oz. 1 dwt."—Macgregor's *Hist. of Glasgow*, p. 291.

[2] Robertson's *General View of Agriculture*, 1794, p. 50; *Coltness Collection*; Fullarton's *Agric. Ayrshire*, p. 8, etc.

[3] Morer, travelling in 1689, says: "It is almost incredible how much of the mountains they plough, while the declensions—I had almost said precipices—

hillsides and mountain declivities, even on the flanks of Schiehallion, marks of ancient furrows, sentimentally fancied that these were signs of fine cultivation by a once prosperous people, who had been driven from their quiet valleys. These supposed proofs of prosperity were, however, really tokens of poverty. The imagined signs of an energetic husbandry were evidence of wretched want of cultivation; telling of an undrained soil, of deep, wide morasses, filled with rushes and inhabited by lapwings, which had forced the poor husbandmen in their despair to this high farming in the only dry spaces they could find, which ill-requited seed-time and labour.[1] Equal marks of poverty met the traveller's eye in the natives clad in blue rags, their skin browned with dirt, their gait listless; in the horses—dwarfish, lean, and hungry; the cattle, emaciated and stunted; the miserable hovels of turf and stone; the poor patches of tilled land, abounding in thistles and nettles in the ridges. Nor was the ugliness of the social aspects redeemed in the traveller's eyes by grandeur of scenery. On the contrary, the rugged, desolate mountains, the gloomy glens, filled him only with disgust: the taste for wildness of nature was not yet born—nor was it born till late in the century.

In such a country, whenever seasons were bad and crops were blighted the peasantry were always reduced to extremity. Years of dearth came often, and as in 1709, and 1740, and 1760, the condition of the people was woeful. If we ask why this was, and why such a disastrous state of the people occurred in Scotland, while England was almost entirely free from it, we find the explanation—not in the unpropitious northern climate, in its excess of rain, and mist, and cold—but in the barbarous mode of its agriculture. When we consider the style of farming, the utter ignorance of or prejudice against every rational method of cultivation, we

are such that to my mind it puts 'em even to greater difficulty to carry on their work than they need be at in draining the valleys."—*Short Account;* Stewart's *Sketches*, i. xli.

[1] Logan's *Scottish Gael*, vol. ii.: "One reason urged against winter ploughing was, that so much of the ground tilled being in declivities, the winter rain would wash the soil down into the morasses lying below."—Walker's *Hebrides and Highlands*, i. 180.

begin to understand how and why farmers were unable to bear up against bad seasons, and even in good ones had barely sufficient food for the support of the population; and how Fletcher of Salton could say that such unproductive soils were rackrented at from 2s. 6d. to 1s. an acre.

The land attached to each farm was divided into "infield" and "outfield"; that nearest the house being the croft or "infield," to which all the care was devoted. Although manure from towns was so little valued that it was flung into the nearest river, whatever manure was used was put upon this infield, to improve which the farmer would even unthatch his peat-covered home; making the soil so rank that it was luxuriant only in weeds. (Lime was hardly known as an aid to the soil before 1730.) Here was a constant succession of two crops, one year oats, next year barley; or in some parts, as in Galloway, the ground grew, with the exception of a ridge of flax, only bere or barley for four or six years without intermission—every third ridge receiving each year all the nourishment.[1]

Six times larger than the "infield" was the "outfield," —wretched, ill-kept, untended ground,—each portion of which was put perpetually into oats, or, more usually, for three years in succession; and thereafter it lay for another three or four years, or even six years[2] fallow, acquiring a rich "natural grass" of weeds, moss, thistles, on which the horses, sheep, and black cattle fed. Ground was cultivated till it produced only two seeds for every one sown; the third year being called the "wersh crop," as it was miserable alike in quantity and in quality.[3] In consequence of the different treatment and condition of the two parts of a holding the values differed enormously. The infield might be let at 3s. an acre, while the outfield was rented at only 1s. 6d., or even at 1s. an acre.[4] Still, however, in spite of all disastrous experience of centuries,

[1] Agnew's *Hereditary Sheriffs of Galloway*, p. 449; *Hist. of Galloway*, ii. 6.

[2] *Stat. Acct.*, Caputh, ix. 455.

[3] *Select Transactions of Society of Improvers of Agric.*, edited by Maxwell, Edin. 1740, p. 214; *Ure's Agric. of Dumbartonshire*, p. 45. "Land was cultivated if it produced 2 seeds, 4 seeds was reckoned a noble return."—Murray's *Lit. Hist. of Galloway*, p. 168. In some districts only two seeds produced for one sown up to end of century.—*Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Balquhidder, vi. 93.

[4] In Forfarshire in 1750 the infield let from 4s. to 10s., while the outfield let at only 1s. 6d. an acre.

people clung to their ancient system, and their faith was embalmed in those popular wise saws which condense so much popular stupidity:—

> "If land be three years out and three years in,
> T'will keep in good heart till the deil grow blin'."

The grain most sown was the poorest and least prolific kind, which was abandoned almost everywhere but in Scotland. It was the gray oats, which at its best only gave increase of three seeds for one; and bere, which, although the least nutritious of all barley, was grown because it was believed to be the only sort that would flourish in the soil.[1]

There were no enclosures, neither dyke nor hedge between fields, or even between farms; so that when harvest began, or the cereals were young, the cattle either required to be tethered, or the whole cattle of the various tenants were tended by herds (with the number of the different flocks notched on the clubs they wielded), who took them out every morning over the same route, where they picked up whatever whins or weeds they could find, and after being chased out of every unenclosed tempting field of corn, were brought back at night half famished and wholly exhausted.[2] When the harvest was over the cattle wandered over all the place, till the land became a dirty, dreary common; the whole ground being saturated with the water which stood in the holes made with their hoofs. The horses and oxen, being fed in winter on straw or boiled chaff, were so weak and emaciated that when yoked to the plough in spring they helplessly fell into bogs and furrows; even although, to fit them more thoroughly for their work, they had been first copiously bled by a "skilful hand."[3] Cattle at the time of their return to the pasture, after the long confinement and starving of winter, were mere skeletons, and required to be lifted on their legs when put into the grass, where they could barely totter. This period and this annual operation, when all neighbours were summoned to carry and support the poor beasts, were known as the "Lifting."

[1] *S. A. S.*, Kilmarnock, ii. 689.

[2] Pratt's *Buchan*, pp. 17, 75.

[3] *Agric. of Forfarshire*, by G. Dempster, 1794, p. 2; *Agric. of Forfar*, by Rogers, 1793, p. 4; *Parish of Carluke*, p. 239.

The methods of tillage were supremely clumsy and primitive. The ploughs were enormous, unwieldy constructions which, being all made of wood, except the coulter and share, could be made in a forenoon for a shilling. Each plough was drawn by four or six meagre oxen and two horses, like shelties; or even by twelve oxen—two, or three, or four abreast.[1] As they dragged it along a whole band of men attended to keep them going. One man who held the plough required to be strong enough to bear the shock of collision with "sit-fast" stones; another led the team, walking backwards in order to stop the cattle when the plough banged against a frequent boulder; a third went in front with a triangular spade to "mend the land" and fill up the hollows; and yet a fourth, as "gadman," was armed with a long pole with sharp point to goad the lagging beasts, and was required to exercise his skill of loud, clear, tuneful whistling to stimulate them to their work.[2] With all this huge cortége, a plough scratched half an acre a day, and scratched it very poorly. The harrows, made entirely of wood,—"more fit," as Lord Kames said, "to raise laughter than to raise soil,"[3]—had been in some districts dragged by the tails of the horses, until the barbarous practice was condemned by the Privy Council. These wooden harrows, made at the cost of 7d., were in high esteem, from its being thought impossible for iron teeth to produce a good crop. The harness[4] consisted of collars and saddles made of straw, and of ropes made either of hair cut from horses' tails or of rushes from which the pith had been stripped.

Perhaps the most serious obstacle to progress in agriculture was the almost universal system of "run-rig." The fields were divided into separate "rigs" or ridges, which were cultivated by different tenants.[5] One small field might be divided into

[1] Donaldson's *Agric. of Morayshire*, 1793, p. 76.

[2] A. Dickson's *Treatise on Agric.* 1765, i. p. 244. Hence arose the north-east country proverb, "Muckle whistlin' and little red land," signifying much effort and little result (Gregor's *Folk-Lore*, p. 180); equivalent to the saying, "Mickle din and little woo." The phrase was applied to a popular preacher with more sound than substance.—Macfarlane's *Life of Dr. G. Lawson*, p. 22.

[3] *Gentleman Farmer*, p. 48, 6th edit.

[4] Anderson's *Survey of Agric.*, p. 25; *History of Galloway*, ii. chap. v.; *Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Gigha.

[5] Fletcher's *Second Discourse;* Pennant's *Tour*, ii. 201. In ignorance of the

an occupancy of from four to eight persons, and a farm with a combined rent of £50 might have eighteen tenants, amongst whom the land was redivided by lot each year or put up for auction. The tenants had their cottages clustered together, so that in some places a township was like a little village. The quarrels and the misunderstandings between these men were violent and incessant.[1] As no operation could begin without mutual help with horses, and oxen, and men, and common arrangement as to crops, they required all to be agreed as to the day and hour of beginning labour, the times and mode of ploughing, sowing, reaping. But as each had his own obstinate opinion on each of these matters, the bickering might cause the lapse of weeks before all consented to work together, and, if possible, to spite each other. So jealous were they of their neighbours, that each one made his rig as high as possible, so that none of the soil should be carried to his neighbour's ground; and in consequence that which accumulated on the top was never stirred deeper than the shallow ploughshare could scrape; while the seed lost on the sides in harvest was hardly worth gathering. The ridges—each alternate ridge having a different tenant—were usually 20 feet wide, and often as wide as 40 feet, crooked like a prolonged S, and very high. Only the crown of the rig, which was full of stones, was ploughed, and half the width of the ridges and the ground between them were taken up with huge "baulks" or open spaces filled with briars, nettles, stones, and water.[2] How could any waste land be reclaimed under such a system? If one man dared to cultivate a neglected bit of ground, the others denounced him for infringing on their right of grazing on the outfields. How could he begin the growing

origin of this custom (then decaying in England) in village communities (which were transformed into villan holdings in the Middle Ages) it was fancied that it arose for the purpose of mutual defence from the enemy—an end secured by common interest in the soil.—*Interest of Scotland Considered*, 1733; *St. Acct. Scot.*, Wick, p. 26; *St. Acct.*, Ayton, i. 31.

[1] Robertson's *Survey of S. District of Perthshire*, p. 18.

[2] Fullerton's *Survey of Ayrshire*, p. 41; Ure's *Dumbartonshire*, p. 15; *Survey of Ross-shire*, p. 209; *Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Kilwinning, xi. 151. "Even up to 1756 in Clydesdale, near Glasgow, the baulks between the rigs were mostly covered with heath, broom, whins, growing among stones."—Brown's *Hist. of Glasgow* p. 170.

of any new crop? The others, viewing every innovation with the contempt which comes from that feeling of superiority which ignorance and stupidity produce, would refuse to join him. Having no lease, he had no motive to improve land which next year might be in the hands of another man to whom it fell by lot. He could not store hay for the cattle, because the instant the harvest was over the whole land became open pasturage for the whole township.[1] Yet, in spite of its absurdity, the people were so devoted to their "run-rig," or "stuck-run-way" plan, that if twenty fields were allotted to twenty farmers, they would rather have a twentieth share in twenty fields than have one field each to himself.

The customs regarding times and seasons for conducting farming operations were of the most rigid order: traditions and usages had acquired a sanctity and force which few dared to gainsay. It was not permissible to begin ploughing until spring, as the undrained soil was too wet to allow of it earlier. No farmer would yoke a plough till Candlemas, and many would not begin till the 10th of March—some not till the 20th of March—having a profound reverence for days and seasons in agriculture, though an equally profound horror of them in religion.[2] The consequence of this rule was that the gray oats were not usually sown till April, even up to the close of the century, and it was often May before the "bigg" or four rowed barley was put into the ground, and in many places the year had advanced as far as the end of May or beginning of June before the bere was sown.

In those days, when the soil and minds of the farmers were equally uncultivated, everything was ruled by ancient ways.[3] Greatly they believed in the traditions of the elders, which pronounced that "it was not too late to sow when the leaves of ash cover the pyot's (magpie's) nest"—which was the month of June.[4] They protested that if it were sown earlier it would be smothered by the marigold, wild mustard,

[1] Pennant's *Tour*, ii. 201; Robertson's *Southern Districts of Perthshire*, p. 118, p. 308.

[2] Walker's *Hebrides and Highlands*, i. 200; Ure's *Rutherglen*, p. 180; Marshall's *Agric. of Central Highlands*, p. 46; Fullerton's *Agric. Ayrshire*.

[3] *Stat. Acct. Scotland*, xiv. 10, Chirnside.

[4] Marshall's *Central Highlands*, p. 40.

and thistles, and everyone believed that the seed sown in February would be certainly killed by the frost. Accordingly, none was put into the earth till the first of April,[1] and the result was that the grain—and the worst grain was carefully reserved for seed—did not mature till the autumn gales set in. It is not surprising that frequently the ground produced only about two bolls on an acre, which did not repay the time and labour.

III

With a system so atrocious, with land uncleaned, unlimed, unmanured, undrained, it frequently happened that the yield could not feed the inhabitants of the district, and men renting from forty to a hundred acres needed to buy meal for their families. In consequence of the bulk of their crops consisting of only gray oats when meal failed them—which always happened when bad seasons came—the people were in destitution and despair. In such straits the town-folk were reduced to the sparest rations, and country people bled the half-starved cattle to mix the blood with a little meal—a practice which in many quarters began in dire necessity and was continued as a matter of taste.[2]

The people lay at the mercy of the seasons; for if their oats were destroyed or barley blighted—their only two products—they had nothing else to live upon—for pease, though grown, only supplied a little meal: a week of rain, a night of storm, a premature frost or snow, might reduce them to the point of starvation. This helplessness fostered in them a sense of awe and dependence on Providence, which gave a peculiar power to

[1] Russell's *Haigs of Bemersyde*, p. 484; Ure's *Dumbartonshire*, vii. 180.

[2] Fullerton's *Agric. of Ayrshire*, p. 8. "During these times when potatoes were not generally raised in the country, there was for the most part a great scarcity of food, bordering on famine; for the stewartry of Kirkcudbright and county of Dumfries there was not as much victual as was necessary for supplying the inhabitants; and the chief part of what was required for the purpose was brought from the sandbanks of Esk on tumbling carts on Wednesdays, and when the waters rose by reason of spates, and there being no bridges, so the carts could not come with the meal. I have seen the tradesmen's wives in the streets of Dumfries crying because there was none to get."—Letter of Maxwell of Munches, referring to 1725-1735, in Murray's *Lit. Hist. Galloway*, p. 338.

ministers, whose voice in prayer could stay the fury of the elements and dispel the withering "haar" and mist over the marshy soil, and make the sun break forth. It was quite a common experience, when the snow was drifting over the wild moors, and the people were in dismay with only a few days' food for their cattle, that the minister wrestling in prayer seemed to avert the impending ruin. In such a period, Mr. Thomas Boston, in the bleak parish of Ettrick, records: "The Lord was with us in praying and preaching from Joel i. 18, 'Now do the beasts groan, etc.'[1] The Lord graciously heard our prayers. The morrow was no ill day; but on the Friday the thaw came by a west wind." Unfortunately, piety did not uproot the inveterate sluggishness of farmer and labourer: it seemed rather to dignify dirt and to consecrate laziness. The people believed that disease was due to the hand of God, instead of being due to the want of using their own hands.[2] They held that every season of dearth was owing to Providence rather than to their own improvidence. They protested that weeds were a consequence of Adam's fall, and that to remove docks, wild mustard, and nettles was to undo the divine curse. They threshed the corn with the flail, and winnowed it by throwing it up in the air, rather than use the outlandish fanners which Meikle had set up in 1710; because "it was making Devil's wind," contravened Scripture, which said, "The wind bloweth where it listeth," and took the "power out o' the hands o' the Almichty." The ancient mills for grinding oats, it was believed, had been piously placed by their forefathers where they could be worked according to God's order, without artificially embanking the water or turning it from its natural course, which would be sinful: Providence ordained the site, man had only to discover it. Pious feeling gave rise to one conviction finer than those prejudices—the belief that it was wrong to gather and glean too exactly all the ears of corn in fields, because birds should be fed as well as man, and some of the bounty of Providence should be left for the fowls of the air.[3]

[1] *Memoirs.*

[2] Ure's *Hist. of Rutherglen;* Ure's *East Kilbride,* 1793, p. 198.

[3] Gregor's *Folk-Lore of North-East of Scot.*, p. 183.

In other ways religious feelings and Christian ordinances ministered to idleness, fostered prejudice, and depressed and hampered agriculture. When "sacramental seasons" came round and set in with their usual severity, the workpeople would sometimes attend four or six communions in succession in surrounding parishes. This indeed was a right they claimed by compact as well as a privilege. They trudged over moor and mountain, over bogs and streams, to any parish where communion was to be celebrated under a popular minister beloved on the "Occasions," as the communions were called, till a place with a normal population of 400 was seething with a crowd of 2000. They stayed in the parish in barns, or byres, or lay in open air from Thursday till Tuesday, attending the "preachings." Farmers were obliged to kill sheep for the ministers; to supply oatmeal to feed the hungry communicants; to get straw to furnish beds for the strangers, and food for their horses—no light task when there was scarcely grain enough for their own families or straw enough for their own cattle.[1] Often the Kirk-Sessions met in prayer and perplexity as to how to supply this multitude, on whom they had pity, when they had so few "vivers" for themselves. A popular gospel preacher was a most expensive parochial luxury, for he attracted crowds who consumed their victuals. These protracted holy days and holy fairs encouraged men and women to desert their fields and their farm duties at the most critical periods of the year; leaving their crops to run

[1] Mr. Thomas Boston in 1731 has 777 communicants at his sacrament in Ettrick: "There are nine score strangers at Midgehop; four score of them W. Blaik entertained, having before baked for them half a boll of meal for bread, bought 4s. 3d. worth of bread, and killed 3 lambs and made 30 beds." Another summer: "The people being stinted for victual to entertain their families I could not find it in my heart to burden them through strangers resorting to them in such summers. When it was considered in the Session before the summer came in, it was declared there would not be hay or straw to make beds for the strangers, which touched me to the heart on their account."—*Memoirs.* On another occasion he relates that before the communion "Satan stirred up the spirit of some neighbours against me and my works, apprehending that there would be a great gathering, whereby the corn would suffer." At Creech, in Sutherland, 1714, the people attended in such numbers, even going 50 miles to communion, that the introduction of strangers became so burdensome to the parishioners that the ministers were induced to have the communion only every two years.—Scott's *Fasti Eccles.*, part v. p. 334.

risk from all ravages of ill weather. Such devout exercises certainly did not conduce to agricultural progress and intelligence: they made the people much poorer, if more pious.[1]

IV

The rental of the land was paid chiefly in kind, and was exacted in ingeniously vexatious ways. Partly as a cause of this practice, and partly as a consequence of it, money was extremely scarce in Scotland amongst every class.[2] An estate of £300 yearly rental would often have only £40 paid in money, and that in silver, for no gold was to be seen; the rest was paid in so many bolls of meal, so many sheep, hens, and eggs, butter, and cheese, besides so many days' ploughing and reaping. In Caithness it was partly paid in "cazzies," or baskets for carrying food, ropes for drawing ploughs, and heather tethers for thatching. The result of this method of payment was that money was too rare with lairds, and provisions were too copious. This led to prodigality, waste, and debt. Landlords required huge granaries to store their rents "in kind," and ministers had large girnals to contain their stipends;[3] and it is evident that the massive hospitality rife amongst the landed gentry of olden times was greatly

[1] "I have seen," says a shrewd observer, "above 3000 people on one of those occasions, but supposing that one with another there are only 1500, and that each of them might earn 6d. a day, every sacrament by its three idle days will cost the country about £112 sterling, not including the days that they, living at a great distance, must lose in coming and going, and the losses the farmer must sustain when occasion happens in the hay harvest or seed time, the men of business when they chance to fall on mercat days, or the tradesmen when any particular piece of work requires dispatch. Now, supposing the sacrament only administered twice a year in all our churches, those occasions, as they are at present managed, will cost Scotland about £225,000 sterlg., an immense sum for sermons." —*Letter of Blacksmith to Minister and Elders*, Lond. 1759.

[2] See rents of forfeited estates in Murray's *York Buildings Co.* "Rental of Lochnew estate, 1734.—Dundonnie lands paid £11 : 2 : 2¾ silver rent, 2 bolls meal, 2 bolls bear, 1 wether, 1 lamb, 1 stone butter (rental in 1862 was £292). Auchnotroch farm paid £5 : 11 : 11 silver rent, 2 bolls meal, 2 bolls bear, 1 lamb, 2 quarters butter, 12 chickens (rental in 1862 was £165)".—*Hereditary Sheriffs of Galloway*, p. 528. On Kirklands, in Strathblane, in 1726 there were 14 tenants who paid £432 Scots, 8 bolls meal, 9 hens, 1 dozen capons, 28 days' shearing.—Guthrie-Smith's *Strathblane*, p. 317.

[3] At Tarland Lord Aberdeen had a girnal to hold 600 bolls.

owing to those inconvenient superabundant supplies of grain, mutton, poultry, and fish. Stewart of Appin[1] was said to have received in rent an ox for every week, a goat or sheep for every day of the year, while he had fowls, cheese, eggs, past all reckoning. It was a relief, therefore, for such proprietors to dispense them to the guests that filled their houses and emptied their larders.

The exactions to which tenants were subjected were hard to bear. Whatever the season was, "kain"[2] eggs and fowls must be sent to the "big house," every egg being cautiously examined by the lady, who measured them with rings of different sizes,[3]—those that passed the first being reckoned twelve to the dozen; but fifteen of the second size and eighteen of the third were required to count as a dozen. The poor tenant, therefore, was compelled to keep a great stock of midden fowls which ate up his meagre crops and grain.[4] But far worse to endure were the demands on the time and labour of the farmers, which were exacted as "customs." They remind us of the oppressions and exactions borne by the peasants of France under the *ancien régime*, which stirred the fury of the people against the *noblesse*. Indeed, the burdens and *corvées* under stay-at-home lairds were hardly less harassing, if they were more tolerable, than those under absentee nobles. One of the worst hardships was connected with multures or grindings. Almost all the land was "thirlled" or "astricted" to particular mills on the estate by old feudal rights.[5] Every particle of grain must be taken to these mills except the seed corn; and for his due the miller exacted every eleventh peck, and in some places, such as Dumfriesshire and Ross-shire, every eighth peck, whether the grain was ground by him or not, while the servant took as "knaveship" a forpit (one-fourth of a peck) out of every boll. Some of the old astricted mills were placed on streams which

[1] Stewart's *Sketches of Highlands*, i. 46.

[2] "Kain," from the French *cens*.

[3] Wight's *Present State of Husbandry*, iv. p. 53.

[4] In some districts at the beginning of the century the landlord was also entitled, under feudal privileges, to take the herial horse, or best ox, or other article of value, from the widow of the tenant.—*Hereditary Sheriffs*, p. 519.

[5] *Agric. of Ross-shire*, p. 125; Bryce-Johnstone's *Agric. of Dumfriesshire*, pp. 88-106.

dried up in summer, and if the farmer, not being able to wait till the rain came to move the wheel, sent his grain to another mill which was working, he paid two multures—one to the mill which ground his corn, and another to the "thirlled" mill which could *not* grind it.[1] If the poor man ventured to sell his oats unground he was prosecuted for depriving the miller of his due. If the air was too calm to drive the windmill, too frosty, or too wet, the grain was kept in the mill so long that it was destroyed by the vermin. What made these rules almost unbearable was the insolence and negligence of the millers, against whom popular dislike and suspicion were inveterate. Had they not side-sleeves to secrete furtive extracts of meal?[2] Had they not small pokes hung to receive further snatches of grain from their reluctant customers? Had they not unstamped measures of dubious accuracy to measure their dues? So the people in their anger hinted. The miller could demand on solemn oath a statement of every pea and barley corn given to the horses or dropped to the hens.

It might be supposed that a system so iniquitous could not long survive the rise of prosperity and progress of independence in Scotland after the middle of the century; yet in many places such restrictions continued till its close. An authority, writing in 1795,[3] declares that "what with want of water at one time and want of wind at another, I have known instances of these persons being forced to travel to a distance of three miles to a mill three or four times over, to be employed a whole week for grinding half-a-dozen bolls of meal. In short, there is not in this island such a complete remain of feudal despotism as in the practice respecting mills in Aberdeenshire. I have seen poor farmers by vexation and despair reduced to tears to supplicate from the miller what they ought to have demanded from him."[4] Besides all these obligations to the miller, the farmers were further bound to drive material for repairing the mill, to thatch it, to carry mill-stones for it,

[1] Ure's *Dumbartonshire*, p. 102; *Agric. of Ross-shire*, p. 121.

[2] *Parish of Shotts*, p. 221; Robertson's *Agric. of Aberdeenshire*, p. 48; *Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Barrie, iv. 245.

[3] Robertson's *Agric. of Aberdeenshire*, p. 48.

[4] Johnstone's *Agric. of Dumfriesshire*, Appendix 43; Webster's *Agric. of Galloway*, p. 37.

and to clean the mill-lead, half a mile long, which the miller's own cattle had broken down.

Yet more burdens were laid upon the farmers' shoulders—irksome services which they had to render to the landlord. They had to till, to manure, to sow, and to reap his infield, to cart peat for his fires, to thatch part of his houses, to supply "simmons" or straw and heather ropes for fastening his roofs and stacks, and at the most critical moment of their own harvesting they might be called away with their men and oxen to render their allotted number of days' shearing or "leading in" for the laird. After all these exasperating demands upon his time and earnings the farmer rarely looked for profits from his husbandry—only enough to exist upon. All his produce went, according to the bitter saying, into three shares: "Ane to saw, ane to gnaw, and ane to pay the laird witha'."[1]

While the tenants were poor and oppressed—yet less by tyranny of superiors than by the tyranny of custom—the landowners themselves were deplorably poor and needy; for being paid chiefly in kind, they had little silver to spend; their incomes were small, owing to the miserable condition of farming; and the smallness of their incomes in turn prevented their developing industry, adopting new methods, and improving their properties, however they might desire it. The laird had no credit on which to raise funds;[2] he could not get a loan of even the smallest sum, unless he got several other lairds or men of substance to become security for him; he could only obtain loans on "wadset"—a legal arrangement which put estates in pawn, binding the owner to surrender his property if he could not meet the lender's claims on a specified date. In the dearth of money it was not unusual for a gentleman to assign to another the debts which were due to him, so that bills and bonds in default of money became regular paper currency. On other occasions the grain stored in the girnals was given in payment of other goods, and the tradesmen were paid in so many firlots oats and barley, owing to dearth of coin.[3] For the same reason in the Highlands

[1] *Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Bendochy.
[2] Fullarton's *Agric. of Ayrshire.*
[3] *Book of Glamis*, Scottish Hist. Society, p. 64; *Farmer's Mag.* 1804.

there was only a trade by barter, and in districts in the Lowlands, it is said, masters paid their nailmakers in nails, and they in turn bartered them for bread or drink at the ale-house.[1]

The want of enterprise, the persistence in inveterate ways, and the reluctance to improve the soil and reclaim waste land, or to enclose, was excused and explained by some farmers in those days by the fact that, having no leases, they might be turned out of their land any year, or their rents might be raised the moment they had by their exertions and outlay improved the ground.[2] In East Lothian, where the leases had been introduced about the beginning of the century amongst an enterprising class,[3] and under an enterprising laird, there had been a marked improvement in the farming, greater activity, and more experiments with turnips and other produce. But the hesitation to alter old methods was less due to want of security of reaping the fruit of their labour, than to prejudice, indolence, and obstinacy in retaining old and easy customs.

There was nothing which hindered agricultural progress more than the difficulty of communication and conveyance between farms and towns for markets and seaports. The produce was carried in sacks on horseback, or in later years on tumbrils, which were sledges on tumbling wheels of solid wood revolving with the wooden axle-trees.[4] These vehicles were so small that in a narrow passage the carter could lift them, for they held little more than a wheelbarrow, though they suited the meagre, half-starved beasts that dragged them. They had wheels a foot and a half in diameter, made of three pieces of wood pinned together like the lid of a butter firkin, which quickly wore out, and became utterly shapeless. Yet even these modes of conveyance were a triumph of mechanism

[1] Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, bk. i. chap. iv.

[2] P. 124, *Husbandry Anatomised*, by Jas. Donaldson, 1697—the first book on husbandry published in Scotland ; *Essay on Ways and Means of Enclosing*, 1729.

[3] One of the first to introduce leases was Adam Cockburn of Ormiston, Lord Justice-Clerk in 1698, and his son John—called the "Father of Scottish Husbandry," continued and extended this arrangement with results strikingly successful.—*Farmer's Mag.* 1704 ; Hepburn's *Agric. of East Lothian.*

[4] Burt's *Letters*, i. 13 ; *Tour thro' Britain*, iv. 13.

when the century was young. Carts were a later institution,[1] and when in 1723 one carried a tiny load of coals from East Kilbride to Cambuslang, "crowds of people," it is recorded, "went out to see the wonderful machine; they looked with surprise and returned with astonishment." Yet in many parts of the Lowlands they did not come into common use until 1760; while in the northern districts sledges and creels, borne on the backs of women, were employed to the end of the century.

However admirable the invention was seen to be, it was of no practical use as long as the roads were so bad that carts could not be driven in them.[2] In driest weather highways were unfit for carriages, and in wet weather were almost impassable even by horses—deep ruts of mire, covered with big stones, now winding up heights, now zig-zagging down steep hills, to avoid the swamps and bogs. It was this hazardous state of paths and highways which obliged judges to "ride on circuit"; and this practice, which was begun as a physical necessity, was conservatively continued as a most dignified habit; so[3] that in 1744 Lord Dun resigned his judgeship because he was no longer able to ride. It was therefore needless to introduce carts till the tracks were fit for them, seeing that on their first employment the drivers required to carry spades to fill up the ruts and holes to allow them to advance a hundred yards. When Lord Cathcart, so late as 1753, offered carts to his tenants in Ayrshire, the roads were so execrable that few accepted them as a gift.

By statute, from 1719, able-bodied men in every district were enjoined to give six days' labour in improving the highways—hence called "Statute Labour roads"; but this Act was quietly ignored, and in most places the utmost effort made was a few hours' grudging labour on what was called "Parish road day,"[4] when the male inhabitants turned out for

[1] Ure's *Rutherglen and East Kilbride*, p. 187.

[2] The carts used about 1780 were wholly made of birch without any iron, costing 6s. 8d. in Nairnshire. A farmer in 1743 got two carts for 7s., "which will give a notion of the quality, seeing that in 1800 a cart cost £10."—"Husbandry of Forfarshire," *Farmer's Mag.*, Feb. and May 1806.

[3] Ramsay's *Scotland and Scotsmen*, i. 86.

[4] Campbell's *Balmerino and its Abbey*, p. 240.

their perfunctory and ineffectual task. The famous efforts of General Wade, begun in 1726, only affected 260 miles of the main Highland routes; where, however, the marvellous change enabled Capt. Burt in 1739[1] to rejoice that he travelled roads "smooth as Constitution Hill," which a few years before were dangerous from stones and deep ruts in dry weather, and became hopeless bogs or brawling watercourses in rain.[2] Yet the Highlanders angrily grumbled at the change; complaining bitterly that the gravel wore away the unshod horses' hoofs, which hitherto had gone so lightly over the springy heather, while there was not a forge to make or mend a shoe within fifty miles.

So long as the roads continued in this miserable state carts, it is evident, were of no avail, and everything was carried on the backs of horses. Farmers could only convey their oats and barley to market at the tardy rate of one boll a day on horseback.[3] In the Lowlands it was a hard day's work for a horse to carry from a pit four miles off a load of two cwts. of coal in sacks. Even in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, about 1750, farmers conveyed on horseback their trusses of hay and straw to town, returning with their bags full of coal.

Nothing wrought so remarkable a change in civilising the country, in developing its trade, and improving the social and industrial condition of the people, as the Turnpike Road Act of 1751. Before many years passed by the public roads became smooth and easy; produce was conveyed to markets at a tenth of the former cost and in a tenth of the former time; and a complete revolution was made—as we shall afterwards see—in the whole economical condition of the land.

[1] *Letters from the North*, ii.

[2] We must remember that in many parts of England roads between large towns were in scarcely better state. See Arthur Young's *Political Farmer*.

[3] Hepburn's *Agric.* p. 50: "Horses seldom carried more than about 6 firlots of wheat or of pease; about a boll of barley, or 5 firlots of oats." Hepburn's *Agric. of E. Lothian*, p. 151, 1794: "Even to this day a 'load' of meal means 2 bolls, a 'load' of coals 3 cwts., a 'load' of straw 14 stones or 2 cwts.—being the amount that could be carried in these old times."

V

Every improvement was slow and obstinately resisted by an impecunious gentry and a lethargic and timid tenantry.

Few things had struck English travellers for generations with more surprise than the open, unenclosed, hedgeless landscape, with immense expanses of bleak, waste land. There were, in fact, no enclosures except round the gardens of gentlemen's houses in the early part of the century; farms and fields were left entirely exposed, over which man and beast could wander at their will. It can easily be imagined how dreary, dismal, and monotonous must have been the scenery, without wall, or hedge, or tree, and not a bush beyond a whin to give variety to the view as far as the eye could reach. The early attempts of enterprising landlords about 1715 to enclose the land encountered determined opposition: the people were indignant at their right of pasturing their cattle on other men's ground being grossly infringed; farmers were suspicious of their rents being raised; labourers were excited at the prospect of their occupation as herds being endangered. Meanwhile alarmists declared that hedges would harbour birds which would utterly devour their grain, and that "they would prevent the circulation of the air necessary to winnow the grain for the harvest."[1]

Motives of all complexions, theories of all sorts, combined to raise opposition to the building of a dyke or the planting of a hedge. The rebellion of 1715 had left the country people, especially in the south, unruly and unsettled, and an unquiet spirit quickly showed itself against landlords who resolved to enclose their lands and stock them with black cattle. Tenants were turned out of their holdings, shepherds were deprived of their occupation. In 1725 large bands of men and women attacked the newly-reared enclosures in Galloway. Armed with pitchforks and stakes, they set forth at night to spoil and overturn the dykes, and whenever the leaders raised their cry, "Ower wi' it," down went the walls into a heap of stones amidst

[1] *Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Rhynd, iv. 181, Kilspindie, iv. 282; Morer's *Short Account*, p. 9.

exulting shouts. Other bands went as "houghers" to maim and destroy the cattle of the larger tenants who favoured the loathed enclosures. To stay the riots, the military were called out and the clergy were called in. The General Assembly ordered warnings to be given from the pulpits against the levelling practices of these districts. Many were imprisoned, some were transported; but though order was restored, the prejudices of the people remained stubborn and violent, and the making of enclosures by hedge or dyke received a check for a generation.

In 1740 there came a disastrous dearth in the land: the seasons, so inclement, had spoiled the crops; the winter, so severe, destroyed the cattle in their thousands; in many districts the people were starving, eager to feed on rubbish and weeds and snails, and many died of hunger. It had been as keen a frost in England as in all the north of Europe, in the memorable January when the Thames, being frozen over for many feet, a fair was held and shows performed to multitudes; when in the Newcastle pits the men in deep mines needed fire to keep themselves warm; and people perished of cold in the fields and streets, and wild beasts died in vast numbers. But, while in Scotland cattle died by thousands every winter, and in severe seasons one-half or a third of the flocks and herds were lost, in England, throughout the hardest winter, even such as 1740, the cattle lived unscathed. The remarkable difference between the two countries was not due to difference in climate, but to the fact that in the south there was ample food for the cattle, and in the north there was not. In England, by better cultivation, the land was more productive; there was hay, there were artificial grasses, producing three times the quantity of natural grasses; and, since 1716, turnips had been introduced into fields, yielding provender in abundance. In Scotland, on the other hand, there was little grass in summer, save some, rank and coarse, growing in hollows; and as there was no hay to store in winter, there was only straw and mashed whins to feed them with.[1] So

[1] "Here," writes Lord Leven from Melville Castle, "we have no grass at all; if we have no change of weather the people must starve. The poor creatures in the neighbourhood come here begging leave to pull nettles about

early as 1708 Lord Haddington had sown rye grass and clover, but these met with little favour from farmers who even in the middle of the century despised them as "English weeds," which no self-respecting beast would eat. It was not till the middle of the century that the more enterprising tenantry cultivated artificial grasses in rotation with grain; at which spectacle the veterans pronounced "that it was a shame to see beasts' meat growing where man's meat should grow." [1]

Although introduced into England from Holland for field cultivation in 1716,[2] turnips were only sown by two or three energetic proprietors before 1739, and being sown in little patches broadcast, and never hoed, they naturally failed. Great excitement was caused about Melrose in 1747 by the rumour that a new strange vegetable was to be sown.[3] One morning Dr. John Rutherford came to his field with mysterious bags, and the inhabitants, gathering in crowds, watched the "doctor's man" casting seed in the wake of the plough, while another man behind dragged a whin brush behind to cover the seed with the earth. When it sprang up the curious people pulled up the odd weeds to examine them in spite of threats by tuck of drum, and of iron caltrops or iron traps. When the bullocks were fed on the turnips they grew so big that people accustomed to stunted creatures would not eat such monsters.[4] So late as 1774 farmers in Dumbartonshire would not sow

the dykes for themselves, and heather and moss for their beasts. We have daily shoals of 20 with death on their faces, and at the same time the country is so loose that the people are forced to watch their homes and barns."—April, 1740. *The Melvilles and Earls of Melville*, by Fraser, i. 316.

[1] *Stat. Acct. Scot.*, x. 612. In 1750 a Lord of Session, walking one day with a friend through the field when his men were weeding the corn, expressed gratitude to Providence for raising such a quantity of thistles, "as otherwise when we cannot allow our good corn land to be in pasture, how could we find summer food for our working horses?"—Stewart's *Sketches of Highlands*, ii. 138.

[2] About the middle of the century threshing of whins with flails for horses' food used in the neighbourhood of Glasgow.—Brown's *Hist. Glasgow*, p. 180.

[3] Lord Stair was said to be "the first to have sown" turnips in the open fields, but then so many are "said to have been the first" at all these experiments! Certainly Cockburn of Ormiston planted potatoes in 1724, and sowed turnips in 1725, being the first to raise turnips in drill.—*Farmer's Magazine*, 1804, "Life of J. Cockburn."

[4] Ure's *Agric. of Roxburghshire;* Johnstone's *Agric. of Selkirkshire*, p. 35.

them, although stimulated by bribes.[1] Treated as delicacies, Captain Topham was amused to see turnips in Edinburgh used as part of the dessert at the principal houses; and the author of *Humphrey Clinker* allows that they were used as "whets" at dinner parties.[2]

The same reluctance was shown in adopting potatoes as a produce of the fields. They had been cultivated in a few private gardens[3] in the beginning of the century, but they were rarely raised in fields before 1735, or produced in the kailyards of the people. Hitherto they had been sold as delicacies in ounces and pounds; though after the middle of the century they became the common food of the country. Even in 1740 two sackfuls on a market day supplied the demands of the five thousand inhabitants of Paisley. At first they were regarded with angry suspicion, under the belief that farmers were going to deprive their people of their proper nourishment, which could only be found in the native meal, and they would have none of them. Keenest and fiercest was the antipathy felt in the Highlands to these suspicious tubers, and when the Chief Clanronald, in 1743,[4] brought a small quantity to South Uist, the crofters refused to plant them till their fine "Highland pride"—as stubborn prejudice is euphemistically termed—was mastered by imprisonment. When autumn came they brought the obnoxious roots to the chief's door, protesting that he might force them to plant them, but he could not force them to eat them. Hunger, however, was the most effective argument, and successive years of dearth were effectual in overcoming prejudice; so that in twenty years,

[1] Ure's *Agric. of Dumbartonshire*, p. 51.

[2] *Letters from Edinburgh*, p. 229; *Humphrey Clinker*.

[3] They are mentioned as vegetables for the garden, however, as well as turnips, in *Scots Gardener*, by John Reid, 1683. And as early as 1697 the first Scots writer on husbandry strongly recommended their cultivation in fields, showing how they should be planted, and how they were eaten—probably abroad. "The commonest way they are made use of are boyled and broken, and stewed with butter and new milk. Yea, some make bread of them by mixing them with oats or barley meal after they are broken and stewed with milk, others parboyle them and bake them with apples after the manner of tarts. Several other wayes are they made use of, as eating among broath and broken with kale."—*Husbandry Anatomatized*, p. 129.

[4] Walker's *Economical Hist. of Hebrides and Highlands*, i. 188.

instead of depending on a scanty supply of oatmeal, Highlanders subsisted about nine months of the year on the vegetables which they had so indignantly rejected.[1] We may mark the years between 1740 and 1750 as the period when potatoes were coming into cultivation in Scotland.[2]

Meanwhile, as these changes were being made, the gray oats, the bere, and pease held the field. Though in former times wheat seems to have been grown extensively in many parts of Scotland, very little of it was raised at this time, and it was too scarce and too dear for common consumption.[3] Indeed, the very name of the grain became a metaphor for whatever was delectable and unattainable, as we notice when the Rev. Thomas Boston in his *Memoirs* speaks plaintively of the "wheat-bread days of youth." By rich and poor wheat-bread was not used, and was only presented in slices beside the sweet cake at the tea-tables of the gentry.

For the manufacture of the grain into food every operation was primitive, involving a maximum of labour with a minimum of profit. After the harvest was reaped, the flail was the only means of separating grain from the straw; then the corn was taken to be winnowed on hand-riddles in the open air or hill tops, known as "shilling hills" or laws, or in barns so constructed that the west wind might pass through. In 1710 James Meikle had introduced the use of fanners, which, in spite of pious objections to those human means of raising the wind, gradually made their way among the more enlightened and enterprising farmers.[4] The only mode of grinding barley which prevailed till nearly the middle of the century was by bruising in a mortar or "knocking stones." A little water

[1] Potatoes first introduced into Galloway from Ireland in 1725 by a tenant who carried the produce to Edinburgh on horseback, where he sold them in ounces and pounds.—*Hist. of Galloway.* Half an acre planted on trial in Kilsyth in 1730.—*Stat. Acc. Scot.*, xvii. 282.

[2] Planted in Orkney in 1750.—*Stat. Acc. Scot.*, xii. 354.

[3] Ramsay's *Scot. and Scots.* In the year 1727, when a farmer cultivated 8 acres of wheat (in Aberdeenshire), it was considered so remarkable that the whole neighbourhood was excited.—Robertson's *Rural Recollections*, 247. "About 1768 only 2 sixpenny wheat loaves brought from Perth to two private families in the week."—*Stat. Acc. Scot.*, Auchterarder, iv. 46. Wheat chiefly produced in Lothians.

[4] Hepburn's *Agric. of East Lothian; Farmer's Magazine*, 1804.

was put with the barley into the nether stone to make the grain part with the husk, and it was then beaten with a wooden mell till the "knockit bere" was fit for making broth. Not till 1742 did mills for grinding barley come into active operation to supplant these humble, rude, and wasteful methods. Yet these mills had been known in Scotland long before that time. In 1710 Andrew Fletcher of Salton was residing in Holland, and there he had been struck by the advantage of the barley mill for producing pearl or pot barley over the savage process at home. He thereupon summoned his wheelwright, James Meikle, a man of great sagacity and mechanic of great ingenuity, to come over to take plans of these machines. This he did—being assigned in the agreement that very modest daily sum of one shilling sterling for his entertainment and one shilling for wages; with the equally modest promise and unflattering valuation of five pounds sterling to his wife and children in the event of his losing his life in the enterprise and journey.[1] He returned in safety and success, bringing with him the iron work made in Holland, together with the model of fanners,—a still more successful innovation,—which he quickly introduced. The barley mill was set up, and worked along with Meikle by Henry Fletcher, the laird's younger brother, and tenant at Salton. But the moving spirit of this enterprise was Mrs. Henry Fletcher, who managed everything, had introduced the making of Holland cloth in the field adjoining the mill, and who superintended the mill itself. Tradition told how "Lady Salton" would walk down to her office spinning as she went, and then sit throughout the day transacting business, receiving orders in a room whose door was secured by a chain to prevent strangers entering to examine the work and discover the secret of its mechanism. "Salton mill office" became a centre of business, and "Salton barley meal" was known over all the country, and painted over the shop door of every retailer. But the use of the mill for manufacturing pot barley was confined to East Lothian for about thirty years, and the primitive method elsewhere went on as before.

A still more barbarous method of getting the husk from

[1] Agreement between Jas. Meikle and Andrew Fletcher, in *Farmer's Mag.*, 1804; Hepburn's *Agric. of East Lothian.*

the grain of oats had been in operation when the century was young in the Lowlands, and continued till its close in districts in the Highlands and Hebrides. That consisted of setting fire to several sheaves of corn from the field; when the ashes were blown away the grain was left parched, and thereupon beaten into meal—an expeditious device, by which oats growing in the fields in the morning might appear as bannocks in the afternoon; but it was a disastrously improvident method, which destroyed all the straw, so much needed for provender by the starving cattle.[1]

During this period very little attention was paid to cattle-breeding except in Galloway. There was too little pasture for farmers to keep sheep or cattle on their "mailings" or farms. There was no food for them during the long months in which they were housed or tethered, and the roads were too broken to send them for sale or consumption in distant towns. In spite of beef and mutton being sold at $1\frac{1}{2}$d. or 2d. a lb.,—and a Scots lb. was equal to $22\frac{1}{2}$ ounces English,—the demand was slight, for they were rarely eaten in farmers' houses,[2] where kail and meal and milk were the staple ingredients of the diet, and the gentry killed and salted what they needed at Martinmas. Country towns had no butcher's shop, and only by the tinkling of the bellman was it announced to the inhabitants that a calf or a sheep was to be killed. There was no alternative but to live on this salted fare for half the year, as the cattle, housed all winter and fed sparingly on straw, were too emaciated, and their flesh too miserable, for any mortal to eat.

Down from the far-off glens were driven the black cattle, half-starved and lean, to the trysts—"tryst" being the Scots for an appointed place to meet—at Falkirk or Crieff, where

[1] Morer's *Short Account*, p. 15.

[2] About the middle of the century in Ayr, a town of 5000 inhabitants, not more than 50 head of cattle were killed annually.—Fullarton's *Survey*. Sir David Kinloch, in spring 1732, sold 10 wedders to Edinburgh butchers, and although mutton was at that time of year the only fresh meat brought to market, the butcher bargained for three different times to take away the sheep, lest the market be overstocked. At that time each family in the country killed and salted what mutton and beef they wanted. "Mr. Law of Elvinstone informs me he remembers when there was not a bullock slaughtered in the butcher-market of Haddington during the whole year except the period called 'Lardner time.'" —Hepburn's *Agric. of East Lothian*, p. 55.

they were sold to English dealers at from 20s. to £2 a head; or, if they were emaciated, the Highlanders would give them for a few shillings. It was a hard struggle for Highland farmers to get provender for perhaps 200 head of cattle which were kept confined all winter and spring. They had only straw from about ten or twenty acres of oats wherewith to feed them, and it is not surprising that great numbers perished of disease and hunger, and those that survived sold at a price often as low as 10s.[1] The Gaelic drovers, who knew no English, were at the mercy of smart Yorkshire graziers; especially as they could not, or dared not, take their unsold beasts to the far-off straths from which they had taken weeks to travel, and where the farmers and crofters were expecting oatmeal for their needy families. As a rule the best cattle left the country, and the worst remained at home.

The Highland sheep were of a diminutive breed, stunted from lack of nourishment, with fleeces not much longer than goats' hair;[2] so thin and short, that while now it takes six fleeces to make a stone of wool, then it required twenty-seven of this wool, which was often plucked from the poor creatures' backs. From the month of May the lambs were almost starved, separated from their mothers in order that the milk might be used in the household, and their little jaws gnawed by sticks fixed in their mouths to keep them from sucking, and thereby from pasturing. Firmly was it believed that neither cattle nor sheep could withstand the blasts and snow of winter, and that it was necesary to keep them under cover if the farmer wished them to thrive. It is said that a mere accident dispelled this delusion in the North; that a laird in Perthshire, who had been reduced by ill fortune to become an innkeeper, let his sheep run wild because he was too poor to feed them, and to the general amazement they were in perfect condition when the spring came.[3] The practice of stocking the ground thereupon began, and, spreading widely, hill farming was revolutionised. By 1750 large tracts were being changed to sheep

[1] *Farmer's Magazine*, 1804.

[2] Smith's *Agric. Survey of Argyllshire*, p. 240; Argyll's *Scotland as it Was*, i. 204.

[3] Ramsay's *Scotland and Scotsmen*, ii. 551.

walks, and land rose to six or seven times its former value.[1] The sight of sheep browsing on a Lowland meadow did not give a pleasant pastoral beauty to the landscape. Their fleeces, covered with tar, moss, and dirt, as they crawled under their woollen burdens, made them unsightly objects. Whether originating or not from a desire to add weight to the scanty wool, and impose on buyers, the farmers followed the custom —on pretext of health and warmth—of smearing their flocks with dense tarry coating, till the original weight was more than doubled; the fleece was spoiled, and the expense of cleaning the wool made havoc of the profit. But, however foolish and wasteful any practice might be, the farmers persisted in it with their wonted reverence for aged custom.[2]

VI

Let us turn from the land to the people who worked it. When all labour was dilatory and every movement was slow, the hours of labour were extremely protracted. Usually the work between March and October began at four o'clock in the morning, and lasted till seven or eight o'clock at night—in harvest continuing as late as ten—with one hour's interval for breakfast, and another hour for the repast known as the "twal' hour." This meal was scanty, for even "bonnet

[1] So little was fresh meat used in those days, that in burgh towns in Forfarshire "there was often no butcher, and when a man in the district had a calf or few sheep for sale, the bellman went round advertising the people to come and buy."—*Farmer's Magazine*, 1806. It is said that the only butcher in Lanark was a weaver by trade, who before killing a sheep took good care that the minister, provost, and bailies took shares. The fact was announced by the bellman—

> Bell-ell-ell,
> There's a fat sheep to kill,
> A leg for the provost,
> Another for the priest;
> The bailies and the deacons
> They'll tak' the rest;
> And if the fourth leg we cannot sell,
> The sheep it maun live and gang back to the hill.
>
> Chambers' *Popular Rhymes*, 1826.

[2] *Observations on Methods of growing Wool in Scot.:* Edin. 1756. A favourite song of farmers was, "Tarry woo' is ill to spin"—the only song which Sir W. Scott sang at agricultural feasts, to vociferous applause for well-meant but not successful vocal exertions.

lairds" and farmers had only a handful or two of boiled beans, which they carried in their pockets to appease their hunger in the fields.[1]

During winter and slack months they had the peat to dig and carry on horseback from the moors, the cattle to feed, straw ropes to make for the harness, and halters of the clippings of colts' manes and horses' tails. In the evenings, by the dismal light of the ruffy in their hovels, the men had shoes of horse-hide to furnish with double or triple soles, while women span on the rock or spindle the flax which every farmer grew on some rigs,[2] for the linen which soon filled every press, and the woollen yarn from which was made the clothing of gray and black woollen plaiding and blankets. The sluggishness of labourers was one reason for the long hours of labour. Their laziness had passed into proverbs and bywords. Ray, the naturalist, in 1660, was struck by the habit of the ploughmen putting on their cloaks when they set a-ploughing instead of taking them off, and the same slothfulness struck Pennant, the traveller, more than a century later. Scottish clergy deplored and English visitors ridiculed the poverty-stricken aspect of the peasantry: their pinched faces, wrinkled features, tattered dress, and foul skin and fouler habits[3]—of course, we discount somewhat for foreigners' exaggeration. In 1763, when Lord Bute was high favourite at Court, and many countrymen were living on his patronage, Scotland and the Scots became specially odious to the English. The ways, habits, and condition of the Prime Minister's compatriots formed incessant themes for laughter and satire, and for exasperating jibes from every pamphleteer and Grub Street

[1] Struthers' *Hist. of Scotland*, ii. 625; Wight's *Husbandry*, 1777, ii. 27. In Berwickshire the rule was to "yoke" the horses at sunrise all year round. J. Bruce's *Agric. of Berwickshire*, p. 104. When in later days the ploughmen worked from 6 to 6 o'clock, old folk called them the "easy hours."

[2] Somerville's *Own Life*; Struthers' *Hist. of Scotland*, ii. 224.

[3] "The common people are such in outward appearance as you would not take them at first to be of the human species, and in their lives they differ little from the brutes, except in their love of spirituous liquors. . . . They would rather suffer poverty than work. . . . The nastiness of the lower people is really greater than can be reported; their faces are coloured with smoke; their mouths are wide, and their eyes are sunk as one pulls the face in the midst of smoke; their hair is long and almost covers their faces."—*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1766, p. 211.

poetaster, who, without a change of shirt for his own back, laughed at Scots' shiftless poverty. In all the extravagances in which lampooners indulged there was, however, a painful[1] basis of fact for their coarse descriptions. After Dr. Johnson had defined in his *Dictionary*, "Oats, a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people," Lord Elibank triumphantly retorted, "But where will you find such men and such horses?" We may admire the patriotism, but must regret the mendacity, of his lordship, for both countrymen and countrywomen of the poorer orders—"lean, shabby, and soiled," as the author of *Humphrey Clinker* laments to own—were not such as one could boast of in respect to physical excellence or personal appearance. The English traveller, in 1766, owns that in towns their rudeness is wearing off, and that they are almost civilised and industrious in trading towns; but in the rural districts they had not progressed much from a condition of poverty which was in truth deplorable. The food of the farmers and workers was monotonously poor, for they had nothing to eat except the everlasting oatmeal and "knockit bere," and kail greens from the yards—for other vegetables were almost unknown to them; beef and mutton they never tasted, unless a cow or sheep was found dead of disease, old age, or hunger.[2] Ale or beer brewed by every farmer at home from oats and heather—"so new that it was scarce cold when brought to table," says Morer—was their chief beverage, with fermented whey kept for a year in barrels in the early part of the century. Milk they could sparingly use, for the ill-thriven cows gave only about two Scots pints a day, and that was invariably sour by being kept in foul dishes.[3] So contemptuous were the people of cleanliness that it was considered unlucky to wash the kirns; they were so given up to superstition that sometimes a frog was put in the tubs to make the milk churn; and they were so full of experimental wisdom that they maintained that

[1] See Churchill's *Prophecy of Fame* for Southron notion of northern life; Gilray's Caricatures; *The North Briton.*

[2] "In Stirlingshire even oatmeal was a luxury, bere meal being chiefly used. In time of scarcity 'gray meal,' a compound of meal and mill dust, was resorted to."—Ramsay's *Scot. and Scots*, ii. 202.

[3] Burt, i. 143.

the consistency of the butter depended on the number of hairs it contained.

Farmers and workers were much about the same rank; and, indeed, in the holdings or "mailings," the most of the work was done by the tenant's family, with the aid of two or three men and women who lived with them. They all met at the same board; sat together by the fireside at night, when the women spun the flax and men shod their brogues; and partook of the same food out of the same dish, which was rarely cleaned.[1] Each man had his horn spoon, which he kept by his side or fastened in his bonnet, to "sup" the kail, porridge, or sowans; while his fingers and teeth did duty for knife and fork on the rare occasions when they were called into requisition by the death of "crock ewe"—the meat being cut off by the farmer with his clasp knife.[2] The houses inside and outside were filthy—the dirt of their homes, of their food, and their persons, did not distress them, except in the familiar disease which too often came over their bodies.

They loved this state; it kept them warm; it saved them trouble; and they enshrined their tastes in their sayings—"The mair dirt the less hurt," "The clartier the cosier."[3] The exposure to all weathers outside and to peat reek within, which filled the room with smoke and feathered the rafters with soot, made their skin hard, brown, and withered, and old-looking before their time. The dress of the people was of the rudest and roughest—the women having coarse home-made drugget, a matted mixture of wool, spun as it came in natural state from the sheep's back—usually no gown, but a short woollen petticoat down to the knees, and their feet were destitute of shoes or stockings.[4] When they went to kirk all dressed their best:

[1] *Stat. Acc. Scot.*, Craig, Fortingall, Tongland; Pennant's *Tour; Scots. Mag.* ii. 29; *Hist. of Galloway*, ii. chap. v.

[2] In those days knives and forks formed no part of a house "plenishing." In 1754 not three farmers had half a dozen knives and forks. *Stat. Acct. Scot.*, St. Vigeans, xii. 184; Carlyle's *Autobiography*, p. 64.

[3] Another saying was, "Muck makes luck." "If the butter has no hair in it the cow will not thrive," was a convenient belief.—Burt's *Letters*, i. 143.

[4] The custom of going barefooted had originated the apology or tradition that "it was founded upon an ancient law, that no males should wear shoes till they were 14 years of age, that they might be hardened for the wars."—Morer's *Short Acct.* p. 14.

the farmers' wives and daughters with "toys" or head-covering of coarse linen, and a tartan or red plaid covering head and shoulders. On Sundays only women wore their shoes; and so unaccustomed were they to the use of them, they seemed to hobble as they walked; so they usually carried them in their hands till they came within sight of the church, when they put them painfully on.[1] The dress of the men was equally rough in material and in fashion. Their garments in daily work were in rags; their hose were pieces of plaiding sewed together; their shirts were of coarse woollen, or of roughest harn little better than sacking, which got no washing save from the rain from heaven.[2] It was usually the practice to change these latter garments at the terms of Martinmas and Whitsunday, or at most thrice a year. It was only on Sunday and holidays, or during frost and snow, that even men wore their shoes, preferring to go barefoot. Their dress on holidays and Sabbath, and burials and courting, was home-spun suit of friezed cloth: homely enough, but yet when decked with ribbons and bows in their garters and bonnet, the ploughmen could appear in smart attire.[3] The dress of the farmer was very little different to his men. Only the laird and the minister in the parish possessed a hat, while he wore only a bonnet; though in distinction from his servants, who had blue bonnets, his was usually black. Thus everything was poor, rough, and frugal.[4]

With the bleak and barren landscape and the meagre and shabby living of the people their dwellings were in painful harmony. In 1702 Morer, the English chaplain, described

[1] *Gent. Mag.*, 1766, p. 211.

> The lassies skelpin' barefit
> In silks and scarlet glitter.
>
> Burns' *Holy Fair.*

[2] *Hist. of Galloway*, ii. chap. v.; *Stat. Acc. Scot.*, Bathgate, i. 365; Struthers' *Hist. of Scot.* ii. 625.

[3] In the old ballads and songs this is shown, as also Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd.*

[4] We may take the following as a fair description of the diet of farmers and their servants in the middle of the century; and of the servants, till the end of the century. Breakfast—oatmeal porridge with milk or ale, or broth made of cabbage left overnight, and oat bannock. Dinner—sowans, with milk and oat-cake or kail. Supper at 7 during winter, or 9 in summer—kail (cabbage), with oat-cakes.—F. Douglas's *Description of East Coast of Scotland*, p. 170.

the houses of the vulgar as "low and feeble, their walls made of a few stones jumbled together without mortar to cement 'em, so ordered that it does not cost much more time to erect such a cottage than to pull it down,"[1] without chimneys, and only holes in the turf-covered roofs for smoke to pass. This description will apply to the homes of the people through a great part of the eighteenth century. The hovels of one room were built of stones and turf, without mortar, the holes in the wall stuffed with straw, or heather, or moss, to keep out the blasts; the fire, usually in the middle of the house floor, in despair of finding an exit by the smoke-clotted roof, filled the room with malodorous clouds.[2] The cattle at night were tethered at one end of the room, while the family lay at the other on heather on the floor. The light came from an opening at either gable, which, whenever the wind blew in, was stuffed with brackens or an old bonnet to keep out the sleet and blast. The roofs were so low in northern districts that the inmates could not stand upright, but sat on the stones or three-legged stools that served for chairs, and the huts were entered by doors[3] so low and narrow that to gain an entrance one required almost to creep. Their thatching was of ferns and heather, for the straw was all needed for the cattle. Yet, foul, dark, and fetid as they were, the people liked these hovels for their warmth.

The houses of the tenantry were very little better in most cases than those of their ploughmen and herds, from whom the farmer differed little in dress, manners, or rank.[4] Even in Ayrshire, till long after the middle of the century, they were little removed from hovels with clay floors, open hearths, sometimes in the middle of the room, with walls seven feet high,

[1] Morer's *Short Acct.* p. 19.

[2] *Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Tongland; *Hist. of Galloway*, ii. ch. v; Ure's *Dumbartonshire*, p. 34; *Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Symington, v. 397.

[3] Heron's *Journey through West. Counties.*

[4] Fullarton's *Survey of Ayrshire.* It was such a dwelling as Burns in the Vision" describes—

> There lonely by the ingle cheek
> I sat and ey'd the spewing reek
> That filled wi' hoast-provokin' smeek
> The auld clay biggin',
> An' heard the restless rattons squeak
> Abune the riggin'.

yet three feet thick, built of stones and mud. Only the better class of farmers had two rooms, the house getting scanty light by two tiny windows, the upper part only glazed with two panes of bottle glass. It had been the practice in former times—but dying out in the early part of the century—for the outgoing tenant to remove from the farmhouse all the beams and rafters which he himself had put in; and consequently his successor came not to a home, but to a ruin consisting of four broken walls, and had to virtually rebuild the house, which he in turn dismantled when it became his turn to leave. In these dismal, ill-lighted abodes when night set in the fitful flare of the peat fire was all the light they had, for the "ruffies," or split roots of fir found in the peat moss, were only lit for set purposes, such as family-worship.[1]

A remarkable proof of the stagnation of trade and the total absence of all enterprise and industrial progress is to be found in the fact that the rent of land, the price of grain and of articles of food and clothing, the wages of men, remained almost stationary during the hundred years between 1640 and 1740. The earnings of farm servants varied considerably; but if we may take Stirlingshire as affording a fair average in 1730, the best ploughman living with the farmer had 35s. a year, with a few "gains" or "bounties"—consisting of a pair of shoes, coarse linen or harn for a shirt, and one or two yards of plaiding; female servants had 13s. 4d. in money, with an apron and a pair of shoes. In 1760, money and bounties taken together, the earnings of men in the house amounted to £3, those of the women to 20s.; while married ploughmen had wages worth from £7 to £8—only £3 or £4, however, were paid in money, the rest being in kind. Yet small as were their earnings, with tastes simple and habits frugal, there was little discontent and discomfort in their lot, for these times contrasted pleasantly with their younger and poorer days.[2]

[1] *Court Book of Barony of Urie*, 1604-1747; Scot. Hist. Society.—Court of Barony, 1705, ordains "that no tenant or cottar removing from their respective farms shall pull down any of their house walls more than free their timber."—P. 47.

[2] Ramsay's *Scot. and Scots*, ii. 211. Ploughmen in 1735 had £8 Scots = 13s. 4d., and bounties of clothing = 11s. 6d. In 1740 he had 32s. Female

If the condition of the Lowlands was deplorable, the state of the North was grievously worse. Crofters hired their little patch of ground from the tacksman, or lease-holder, of the laird or chief, which gave him space only where he could sow a boll of oats, often in places where it was impossible for a plough to go owing to the rocks, moss, and heather, and where the soil could only be dug by the triangular spade of the people—and for this privilege vexatious services were exacted of them. On the proceeds of this, with the aid of a cow or two, a household subsisted.[1] To occupy the families that swarmed in Highland glens and islands there was not sufficient work or food, and even by the sea those who were fishers were too lazy to pursue their occupation, except when driven to it by necessity, and there was no trade or market in remote regions by which they could barter their fish for clothes or more palatable food. They loitered through their summers and idled out the winters in congenial inactivity, scorching their feet at the peat fires round which their toes in circle converged as they lay on the floor.

Even farther south, in Perthshire and Stirlingshire, tacksmen would subdivide a piece of ground, only enough to give work for one man and four horses or oxen, into patches of poor soil for sixteen families to occupy at about 12s. a year rent.[2] In such conditions there was a stagnation of all energy,

servants in 1735 had 3s. 4d. wages, with 6s. or 7s. in bounties. A few years later they had 15s. in money.—*Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Caputh, iv. 495. There are now (1793) living in the parish two old men who in their younger days were servants, one at 20s. and the other at 30s. a year. Now it is from £4 to £6, with entertainment, better than the tenant could afford.—*Stat. Acc.*, Birse, ix. 114.

[1] A writer later in the century gives a description of the state of matters which is equally applicable to this period: "Neglected by Government, forsaken or oppressed by the gentry, cut off during most of the year by impassable mountains and impracticable navigation from the seats of commerce, industry, and plenty, living at considerable distances from human aid, without the necessaries of life, and depending most generally for the bare means of subsistence on the precarious appearance of a vessel freighted with meal or potatoes, to which they in eagerness resort though at a distance of fifty miles. Upon the whole, the Highlands, some few estates excepted, are the seats of oppression, poverty, famine, and wild despair."—Knox's *British Empire*, i. 128.

[2] MS. of Graham of Gartmore, 1747, in Burt's *Letters*, Append. ii. 343. In Buchanan parish, Stirlingshire, and elsewhere, "150 families may live on ground paying £80 a year."

a hopelessness of all betterment of life, a docile resignation to, if not contentment with, a poor and squalid lot.

In these homes there came disease in the forms that ill odours, ill ventilation, and dirt engender—especially that cutaneous trouble which was associated with the Scots to their discredit. Infectious diseases were propagated readily, owing to the common fatalism of the pious-mooded people, who held that everything is ordained of God, and that if a thing did happen it was "bound to be."[1] So in sick huts the neighbours assembled on Sundays in their interest and curiosity, till the hovel was full of sympathy and foul air. The patient was stifled by heat, and the friends bore away the seeds of disease. Small-pox ravaged at times, and was spread by the people, who filled the small rooms in pious belief that no one could hasten or hinder a death. Amongst this people, inured to hard life, rheumatism was a constant complaint, arising from the moist air and incessant exposure, with wet soil outside and wet clothing kept on inside the homes. The one ailment to which they were most liable, and in which dirt had no share, was ague.[2] This was due to the undrained land, which retained wet like a sponge, and was full of swamps, and bogs, and morasses in which "green grew the rushes." Terribly prevalent and harassing this malady proved to the rural classes, for every year a vast proportion of the people were prostrated by it, so that it was often extremely difficult to get the necessary work of the fields performed in many districts. In localities like the Carse of Gowrie, which in those days abounded in morasses and deep pools, amongst whose rushes the lapwings had their haunt, the whole population was every year stricken more or less with the trouble, until the days came when drainage dried the soil and ague and lapwings disappeared.

[1] *Stat. Acct.*, Kilfinan, xiv. 235; Kirkcaldy, xviii. 7; Dumbarton, iv. 72. The last writer, evidently a "moderate," attributes spread of disease, especially small-pox, to crowded houses and "an over-anxiety for constant prayer over the diseased." Only 6000 persons were inoculated in 1765.

[2] *Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Ayton, xi. 81; Cramond, i. 325; Kirkden, ii. 508; Donaldson's *Agric. of Carse of Gowrie*, p. 11.

VII

In such squalid conditions of living there was little to elevate the tone of rural society, and if amongst the peasantry tastes were coarse, amusements rough, and manners rude, there is little cause for wonder or for blame in people existing in such sordid surroundings and in such hovels in such wretched contiguity. Enjoyments they had—at their Fastern's E'en, their Hallowmas, their Fairs, and their Sacraments—those Holy Fairs associated with scarcely less excitement. In the south country they had their gatherings in the evening,[1] when, with music, singing, and dancing, they also enacted the story of some old song, little dramas, not too refined, in which they showed what rustic skill and rude humour they could. On moonlight nights they held their favourite meetings in barn or cottage, called "Rockings,"[2] when young women brought their "rocks and reels," or distaff and spindles—where young men assembled, and to the accompaniment of the spinning of the wool and flax the song and merriment went round, till the company dispersed, and girls went home escorted by their swains, who carried gallantly their rocks over corn-rigs and moor. When "rocks" were no more used, and spinning-wheels had taken their place, still by the familiar name of "rockings" were these merry social meetings called.[3]

All great domestic events were accompanied by roystering and drinking—at a christening there was much, at a funeral there was more, at a wedding there was most. Boisterous mirth and play attended every stage of bridal preparations—the foot-washing of the bride, the humours of the feast, the dances at the wedding, and what not. The gayest were the "Penny Bridals," for which each neighbour contributed in olden times

[1] Allan Cunningham's *Songs of Scotland*, i.; Cromek's *Remains of Nithsdale Song*, p. 122—such as "Waste and Thrift," or the song called "The Rock and wee pickle Tow," played at kirns, "Wooing the Maiden," at close of wedding feasts, and "Auld Glenae."

[2] Rock and reel were going out about 1730 in the Lowlands, and had disappeared by 1740.—Henderson's *Annals of Dunfermline*.

[3] At Fastern's e'en we had a rockin',
To ca' the crack an' weave our stockin'.
Burns' *Epistle to Lapraik*.

one penny Scots, but now gave meal, or fowls, or ale to plenish the feast of every impecunious couple. The Church lifted up its voice and laid down its laws[1] against these weddings, which they abhorred as occasions of drunkenness, profanity, and sensuality—especially in "promiscuous dancing of men with women." However the Kirk might threaten and punish, the people danced defiantly; for to dance "promisky,"[2] as they called it, was their one great delight, and lairds and farmers sent money and food and drink to supply the festival. That these scenes were often wild and indecorous was certainly the case; and so far the clergy had reason to condemn them. But, unfortunately, the Church placed its embargo on all pleasures alike; put in the category of moral offences the harmless exuberances of youth and the gross offences of manhood and womanhood, with no sense of proportion—in fact, with no sense whatever. In consequence, the peasantry, despising foolish ecclesiastical rebukes on their harmless pleasures, got to respect quite as little the wisest restraints on their sins.[3]

People's songs reflect the people's mind and picture the people's life; many of these folk-songs have long ago disappeared: some because they were poor, many because they were utterly gross—so different from the fine old ballads—and only the airs, harmless and pretty, lived on. Of the songs that do survive in their original form it may be said there is a charm of simplicity and plaintive sweetness in some, a rich shrewd humour, a lilting audacity in others; but too many are of the earth, earthy: there is the mean bargaining over tochers, and sordid offers of gear as stages of the uncouth

[1] General Assembly, 1645, 1701, 1706, 1719; Presbytery records, *passim*.

[2] Hall's *Travels in Scotland*, i. 203.

[3] One of the favourite little rustic plays was "Auld Glenae,"

"Poor auld Glenae, what ails the Kirk at thee?"

where the inquisitorial severity of the Kirk was ridiculed with gross allusions and broadest humour, the company enacting the familiar scenes in Kirk and Session—the solemn admonitions from the pulpit, the mock simplicity of the transgressor at the pillar—all this to the merriment of old and young, child and mother.—Cromek's *Remains*, 122; A. Cunningham's *Songs of Scot.*, i. 148. See Herd's *Collection of Songs* for more accurate and less bowdlerised versions of favourite lyrics.

wooing; there is coarse plainness of speech, and sly innuendoes which are worse. In 1724 Allan Ramsay, when he began to issue his *Tea Table Miscellany*, altered popular songs—spoiling some, improving others to make them fit for decent society—not too successfully. It was left for Robert Burns to rescue many fine tunes from oblivion, as they lingered on the ears of a few peasants who remembered only snatches of the songs to which they had been set; and to meet the requirements of his decorous editors to change wanton words to others of purer strain, to compose new verses to suit those old melodies which, bereft of the ancient songs to which they had been wedded, were waiting for a new song to sing.[1] Thereafter the grosser versions went out of use and favour, and the fresh versions won a place in the affections of a more modest generation.

The literature of the people in the early part of the century was very restricted. In a shelf in the cottage might lie a Bible, a Confession of Faith, a well-thumbed, peat-smoked volume of Rutherford's *Letters*, which were read on the Sabbath day to the interest of the old and the yawns of the young. The travelling packman every now and then came, and amidst the miscellaneous contents of his wallet were chapbooks: *The Prophecies of Peden, Life of Sir William Wallace,* the *Ravishing dying Words of Christina Ker, who died at the age of* 7, and songs and ballads, some as broad as they were long. In some districts the sight of Patrick Walker on his white pony about 1720 was a delight to sedate and serious-minded people, who listened to the pious covenanting pedlar as he denounced the growing ungodliness of the age. But this was dull to younger folk, who loved songs and stories which would have made the grim Covenanter sadder still.

It was not till about 1750 that a popular and vernacular literature was concocted, more congenial to the tastes and habits of the rural population than *History of Robin Hood.* This was the work of a pedlar very different from the long

[1] Many a well-known song has gone through the purifying ordeal at the hands of Ramsay and his friends, or of Burns: "Duncan Gray," "Coming thro' the rye," "Get up and bar the door," "My love she's but a lassie yet," "O mither dear I gin to fear," etc. etc.; Cunningham's *Songs of Scot.*, 4 vols. 1819; Chambers' *Scottish Songs;* Johnson's *Musical Museum;* Stenhouse's *Illustrations of Lyric Poetry and Music of Scot.*

deceased Walker, composer and hawker of pious chapbooks of their fathers. Dugald Graham was a familiar personage in Glasgow streets up to 1780 as bellman of the city—a strange, grotesque, dwarfish figure, with humpback, pigeon-breast, and punch-like nose, limping up the Trongate, resplendent in a long scarlet cloak, blue breeches, and cocked hat.[1] Ere he had been installed in this important office of "skellat bellman" he had travelled as "flying stationer," or "travelling merchant," through the countryside, and sold chapbooks which he had himself written and printed about 1754. These quickly became the favourite reading of the peasantry: *John Cheap the Chapman, Lothian Tom, Leper the Tailor, Jocky and Maggie's Courtship,* and others, were sold in every village and farm, and were the delight of every ploughman. As the little deformed man came ambling on his pony, crowds collected to buy his wares, to laugh at his broad jokes and stories, given with Rabelaisian unction by the leering cripple. The chapbooks are full of coarse, dramatic vigour, of gross humour in a dialogue of vulgarest Scots. Animal they are; often unclean in the utter plainness of speech with which they depict the common incidents of rustic life. Yet they are valuable from their portraiture with rare fidelity of the tone, speech, talk, habits, morals, and immorals of the people. In the style with which this Boccaccio of the byre told his comic stories, the finer side of peasant character is not to be found—the love scenes have no romance, the religious references have no reverence, the idyllic beauty and simplicity of country life are not there. But in them is painted with cynical truth how peasants spoke, how they drank, how they courted, how they wedded, and how they forgot to wed; their rude mirth, their gross pleasures; how little they respected the menaces of the Kirk-Session, how disrespectfully they spoke of "Mess John" the minister behind his back; how lightly they regarded uncleanness in thought, speech, and behaviour.

It is true that Dugald Graham was as unable to appreciate and to describe the purer and higher aspects of Scots life as he

[1] *Collected Writings of Dugald Graham, Skellat Bellman of Glasgow,* edit. by George Macgregor, 2 vols. 1883; Strang's *Clubs of Glasgow;* Fraser's *Humorous Chapbooks of Scotland.*

was to rise to the dignity of history when he composed his doggerel story of the Rebellion, and he wrote in the loosest vein to please the looser sort. But that the prevalent tone of the peasantry was low, in spite of the deep piety of great masses of the people, who had a fine strain of religious sentiment in their nature, and stanch, hardy righteousness in their lives, is abundantly proved by the alacrity with which such stories were read, and by the innumerable editions in rudest type and shape in which they were issued, regardlessly of all copyright, to delight groups at cottage firesides and stackyards. Session records of the past present the same side of society. They prove that the Church had driven the vices under, but had failed to drive them out. These old chapbooks long retained their popularity with the poorer sorts. Songs and ballads in rough broadsides, humorous, pathetic, amorous, and pious; heroic stories with the crudest of woodcuts, tracts and discourses in deplorable type, which the packman carried in his wallet, formed the favourite reading for people of all tastes and temperaments. It is said that 200,000 copies of these chapbooks were issued yearly by petty booksellers about 1770.[1]

One of the all-pervading influences over the minds of the peasantry were superstitions. These grew up side by side with the most austere belief of orthodox religion, like flowers and weeds springing in an ill-kept garden. Each was held with equal tenacity in the same mind, unconscious of any incongruity. Trust in charms, omens, incantations, were rife amongst them all. Every incident of daily life—a baptism, a death, the illness of a cow, the churning of milk, the setting forth on a journey—each was associated with some mysterious sign which foretold it, or some strange rite which infallibly caused or hindered it. Those notions and those practices were guarded from the eye of the Kirk, and were kept as furtively as the teraphim by ancient Jews, who worshipped them in private and adored Jehovah in public. Most deeply rooted were superstitions among the peasantry in remote

[1] Fraser's *Humorous Chapbooks of Scotland*, p. 114. Later in the century the coarsest of these had wide circulation in the North of England, especially in the industrial centres.

districts separated by moor, and hill, and loch, from contact with towns—regions where schoolmasters were scarce and kirks were powerless. They were wide-spread in scattered tracts of Galloway, and abounded with wild luxuriancy in the Highlands, where Celtic imagination ran riot and peopled the air and earth with spirits, and life with omens. But in fact there was no place where they were not prevalent in the early half of the century, and few places where they did not linger when the century had closed. Side by side with belief in the doctrine of the Confession of Faith was the respect for notions whose sources were pagan, or popish, or satanic. There was belief in the virtues of lakes and wells, which were due to heathen deity, or saint, or devil—equal aversions of the Church. To the Doo loch, in Covenanting Nithsdale,[1] the people had gone, in spite of Presbytery, to sprinkle their cripples and palsied in the water, leaving votive offerings of rags and bits of bread as their popish ancestors had done, in gratitude for the unknown patron who wrought the cure. But chiefly in the northern districts were the pilgrimages to lakes and wells of saints, and to their ruined chapels, to exorcise the epilepsy from their sick.[2] At Killin, in St. Fillan's well; to Loch Maree, where they invoked the "God Mairie," Treval's loch in Orkney, and St. Eres in Sutherland, and many another shrine and lake, the inhabitants repaired up to the present century, and decked the trees and bushes on the brink with grateful rags of tartan, ribbons, and oat cakes.[3] Old pagan beliefs lay side by side in peasant minds with those of Calvin. Beyond the Tay they had their Beltane fires—when on the first of May (Old Style) they lit the fire of turf, danced round the flames, and spilt a libation of caudle on the ground; they took their oat cake, having on it quaint knobs, which they flung in turn over their shoulder, saying, "This to thee, protect my cattle," "This to thee, O fox, spare my sheep," "This to thee, O eagle; this to thee, O hooded crow, save my

[1] Penpont *Presbytery Record*, 1695.

[2] At the end of the century this was still constantly done. Pennant's *Tour*, i. 159; Edmonston's *Shetland*, ii. 74.

[3] *Stat. Acct.*, Wick, x. 15; Logierait, Killin; Brand's *Orkney*, p. 42; Mitchell's *Past in the Present*, 143.

lambs."[1] Next day, probably, these idolaters were sitting in their pews in orthodoxy most demure.

Superstition attended every action from birth to death. When the child was born, whether in Galloway or the Hebrides, there was felt a risk of its being taken off during sleep by fairies,[2] who might leave a changeling in its stead. Friends, therefore, watched all night; and making a circle round the bed, they took the "Book" in their hands, and waving the sacred leaves bade all foes begone to the Red Sea. Not till the christening was over was peril past from fairy or from witch, and all visitors, lest they should chance to have the evil eye, were presented with a piece of bread to propitiate any hostile purpose. In most districts when friends met they were careful to salute with a kiss to prevent "fore-speaking"; and nothing they dreaded more than that their children, or goods, or cattle should be praised unless to the praise was added the phrase, "God bless the bairn," "Luck fare the beast."[3] If a cow should fall ill, it would be remembered that their neighbour who called yesterday had praised the animal, but had not added, "I wish her good luck," and ill intent was at once suspected. The possession of the evil eye did not always imply malice: it might happen that a poor man had the fatal gift which cursed his own fortunes—his cattle died, his cow failed of milk, his stacks heated in the yards.[4] It was all because he had the "uncanny eye," and he would avert his gaze as the milk was carried from the byre lest he should turn it sour, would close his eyes as he passed the lambs, and hardly look a neighbour in the face. This reputation of an uncanny eye, however, was a source of profit to others. Old hags who owned it—when witchcraft brought no penalty—got presents of clothing and food, and their peat was "cast" most obligingly to win their favour or dispel their spleen.

[1] Pennant's *Tour*, i. 111.; *Stat. Acct.*, Logierait, v. 82; Stewart's *Sketches of Highlands.*

[2] Still believed in among the Hebrides, vol. iv. 251, *Proceedings Scot. Society of Antiquaries;* Cromek's *Remains*, p. 293; Grant's *Superstitions of Highlanders*, i. 168.

[3] Gregor's *Folk-Lore; Stat. Acct.*, Forglen, xiv. 541; Gargunnock, xviii. 123; Mrs. Grant's *Superstitions of the Highlanders.*

[4] Cromek's *Remains*, p. 289.

Long after witchcraft as a crime was abolished from the statute book it was maintained as a belief; but the supposed witch was no longer burned—she was obsequiously caressed; to gain security from her malice and to gain help from her arts, she was constantly getting a dish of groats, a supply of peat or thatch for her hovel whenever she wanted. Sometimes, however, the caresses to secure her favour turned to rage when they felt her curse, and seizing the old creature they "scored" her, drawing blood above the eyebrows with a cut in the form of a cross.[1] "Scoring the witch" proved a perfect safeguard from her malignant spells. Firmly was it credited when Hallowmas came that the "Hallowmas rades" began, when the local hags gathered for midnight revelry, and in Dumfriesshire [2] met in silent, ruined precincts of Caerlaverock Castle or Sweetheart Abbey. By their peat fires at night old peasants told how the old kimmers had set forth on their eldrich journey—on nights when the wind laid flat their crops and unroofed their huts—sitting on a shank-bone, shod with bones of a murdered man, with bridle made of the skin of an unchristened babe. In Nithsdale only bold men doubted that in Lochbrigg hill, near Dumfries, they held assembly, as the "Witches Gathering" song records:[3]—

> When the howlet has three times hoo'ed,
> When the gray cat has three times mewed,
> When the tod has yowled three times i' the wood,
> At the red moon cowering ahint the cloud,
> When the stars hae cruppen deep in the rift
> Lest cantrips had pyked them out of the lift;
> Up horses a', but [without] mair adowe,
> Ride, ride for Locher brig knowe.

Even up to the next century, boys, as they passed the hut of some old woman whom people eyed askance, put the thumb upon the palm of the hand and closed their fingers over it—a relic of the sign of the cross to avert the evil eye.

It was long ere the belief in fairies passed from a conviction to mere "fairy tales." People implicitly believed in these folk with golden locks and green mantles, with quivers of arrows

[1] Somerville's *Own Life*, p. 366; Pennant's *Tour*.
[2] Cromek's *Remains*, p. 289.
[3] Cromek's *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*, p. 286.

made of bones of a man buried where three lairds' lands meet, tipped with white field flints or elf-stones dipped in dew of hemlock, that slew the cattle as they passed. Folk thought they heard the hubbub of the fairy voices on the first night of summer, while the breeze was rising and sighing through the firs. There were haunts of fairies and brownies which they feared to tread beside ancient thorn-trees. But at last that ground was ploughed as agriculture spread; and Good-man's Crofts became farmers' acres, and corn grew on knolls where elves had held their trysts: then fairies vanished from the land.[1] Beliefs pass on to half-beliefs and thence to myths; and it is difficult to know when a faith has passed into a fancy. The pious rites of one age become the pastimes of another, and an old superstitious practice in time becomes a childish game. Even Hallowmas gradually lost, save for children, its devout superstition, till no longer folk believed the ancient rhyme that at Halloween "all the witches were to be seen." But other superstitions remained deep-rooted—belief in charms and omens innumerable. No farmer would omit to place the branch of rowan or elder tree, of ash or ivy, on the byre door to ward the cattle from blight or witchcraft; or forget to place on the stable door—usually on the 2nd of May—the elf cups, the fancied weapons of fairies, but prosaically stones perforated by friction at a waterfall.[2] Most of all was death with its mystery accompanied by luxuriant superstitions. The moment the spirit left the body the nearest of kin received the breath;[3] the windows and door were opened as if to let the soul get free; on the breast of the dead the plate of salt was placed lest the body swell and burst the bands with which it was swathed. The lyke wake followed, when friends watched the body to keep evil spirits away, and caroused to keep their own spirits up. In the Highlands,[4] to show their

[1] As the adage said—

> Where the scythe cuts and the sock rives
> Hae done wi' fairies and bee-bykes.

Cromek's *Remains*, etc. p. 293. Flint arrow-heads believed to be fairy arrows in the North at end of century.—*Stat. Acct.*, Wick, 10-15.

[2] Pennant's *Tour*, i. 158; *Hist. of Galloway*, ii. 234.

[3] Pennant's *Tour*, i. 111-113; Hogg's *Life of Wightman*, p. 110.

[4] Grant's *Superstition of Highlanders*, i. 180; Pennant's *Tour*, i. 111; *Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Logierait, v. 82-85.

pious fortitude, the parents or nearest of kin performed a lugubrious dance, with streaming eyes, while younger members joined in livelier measure. From birth to death, with rites unknown to the Kirk, with beliefs unknown to science, the life of the people was crowded.

VIII

Nothing was more characteristic of Scotland than the bleak, dreary, treeless aspect of the scenery. We are apt to treat the jeers of old English travellers on this point as merely cockney libels, and to consider the sarcasms of Dr. Samuel Johnson as only ponderous pleasantries as exaggerated as when he asserted that a "tree in Scotland is as rare as a horse in Venice." Unfortunately, the jibes contained a large amount of truth. The ancient woods had disappeared; wasted by raids, burnt as fuel, destroyed as encumbrances of the ground, or sold by impecunious owners. We become almost sceptical of their ever having existed at all when we read the accounts of travellers, like the caustic Sir Anthony Weldon, who in 1617 attended his Majesty, James VI., to his northern dominions, and protested that "Judas had scarce got a tree to hang himself,"[1] if he had betrayed his Lord in Scotland; and Sir William Brereton, who in 1636 says "that he had diligently observed, but cannot see any timber in riding 100 miles." Forests there were truly of great extent; but these were in the Highlands,[2] far out of reach in inaccessible straths; and for the common purposes of work, for house-fitting, for ship-building, for implements, fir and oak were imported from Norway. Only around the houses of country gentlemen, or kirks, in the more cultivated Lowlands, were groves or clumps of wood—usually sycamore or ash—to be seen at the beginning of the century; and most of these of recent origin.[3] Throughout Ayrshire the country was one huge

[1] *Early Travels in Scotland*, edited by Hume. In 1440 Æneas Sylvius (Pope Pius II.) described the country as "destitute of trees."—P. 26.

[2] *Accompt Current*, by J. S[pruell], 1705.

[3] Kirke, travelling in 1677, is able to speak of the "pleasant woods and policies" he passes, of "groves" or clumps of trees about the many pretty houses of the gentry he rode by on his way to Edinburgh, though "not a tree in any part of the country elsewhere."—*Acct. of Tour in Scotland*, by Thomas Kirke,

naked waste; not a tree was to be seen in the open land, and none to be found anywhere except by the banks of the Doon, the Girvan, and the Stinchar, whereon little knots of stunted oaks and beeches took shelter. Those which were planted by the Countess of Eglinton and Lord Loudoun between 1730 and 1740 were only isolated patches when Dr. Johnson made his memorable visit to Auchinleck. In East Lothian there were few trees except round some gentlemen's seats older than the Revolution. It was in 1706[1] that Lord Haddington, stimulated by the taste and energy of his wife, gave up his beloved field sports and devoted himself to improving his estates, and began planting at Tyninghame on the deep sand near the seaside, in spite of confident assurances that nothing could grow on such a barren soil and in such a situation exposed to the ceaseless salt winds. There a fine wood sprang up, and on the moorland rose the lovely Binning woods, while fields formerly wind-swept and desolate became fertile by protection from belts of trees. Through Roxburghshire there was bleakness and barrenness of nature, equalling that of Berwickshire and other southern counties, until round Floors Castle some trees were planted and jealously guarded about 1716. Of the once richly wooded Tweeddale it was said in 1715 that only round the mansions and churchyards were there rows of plane and ash to be seen, and these were still young.[2] Even the landlords who were possessed of forests had no æsthetic affection for them, and were ready to sell to the highest bidder the finest timber on their land. Down went splendid fir woods[3] in Argyllshire to an Irish company at the beginning of the century at one plack a piece, and to utilise the rest of the deciduous trees the speculators set up their forges near Inveraray. Woods there were of great extent in the West Highlands, much of which were cut down for sale in

p. 15; *Modern Acct. of Scotland*, by an English gentleman (Thomas Kirke); *Early Travels in Scotland*, p. 253; Hamilton's *Description of Renfrewshire; Monymusk Papers*, Spalding *Miscellanies*, ii. 53.

[1] *Treatise on Forest Trees*, 1764 [by Charles Lord Haddington], pp. 1-11.

[2] Jeffrey's *Roxburghshire*, iii. 19: Bailies of regality in 1717 issue proclamation, warning offenders who "plucked the haws from the thorns that defend the young plantations." Dr. Alexander Pennicuick's *Works*, 1818, p. 57.

[3] Smith's *Survey of Argyllshire*, p. 138.

Ireland, while the seaports of Scotland were importing fir and oak wood from Norway[1] and from Dantzic to build their vessels at home, and others from lack of timber were built in Holland or the Baltic. When the York Buildings Company bought forfeited estates of 1715, they bought some of the finest forests in the country,[2] the great pine-wood of Abernethy or Speyside, 60,000 of the best fir-trees of Grant, for 2s. 4d. each, and Mr. Aaron Hill devised the plan of making the timber into rafts to float down the river.

In the common destitution of wood in the Lowlands it became a serious difficulty to find timber for a public building. Magistrates were in straits to get wood for a town steeple, and heritors for a beam for a kirk bell.[3] The most common trees had been originally introduced as exotics and treated with the utmost tenderness. When first planted in Scotland (the lime at Taymouth in 1664, the silver fir in 1682, the maple and walnut in 1690, the laburnum in 1704, and the larch in 1727) they were regarded as needing delicate tending in gardens, and as unfit to live in the open field in such a climate. The plane and elder were the chief "barren trees" planted at the middle of the previous century, beeches and chestnuts being found only in sheltered gardens. In 1727 a gentleman brought in his portmanteau some plants of larch from the Tyrol and gave a few as a present to the Duke of Atholl.[4] These—the first introduced into Scotland—were kept in careful training; but at length, being planted out, as too big for nursery culture, it was found, to vast surprise, that they lived and throve and grew, and survivors still stand as ornaments at Dunkeld, parents of great forests.

[1] Spruell's *Accompt Current, etc.*, 1705, pp. 31, 64; Jefris' *Hist. of Union*, p. 174.

[2] Murray's *York Buildings Company*, 1883, p. 61.

[3] In 1703, magistrates of Dumfries, unable to get timber for their town hall and steeple, had to get it from gardens on the Cree.—Maxwell's *County of Dumfries*. Heritors of Lesmahagow, in 1705, in despair pass a resolution "to apply to Her Grace the Duchess of Hamilton for ane oak tree to be stoop for supporting the bell, because they can get it nowhere in the country."—*Hist. of Lesmahagow*, p. 146; Walker's *Economic Hist. of Hebrides and Highlands*, ii. 212. "*Scots Gardner*, published for the climate of Scotland, by John Reid," 1683, enumerates the trees for gardens: oak, elm, ash, maple, lime, hornbeam, hazel, pine, yew, Scotch fir.

[4] Hunter's *Woods of Perthshire*, p. 37.

Though landlords were awakening to the advantage of planting their large and waste estates, the progress was slow and halting; the most of the country remained destitute of wood, as was the case along the sea-coast and for miles backwards in Fife, Buchan, Aberdeenshire, till the close of the century.[1]

May we not attribute to this bleak, woodless aspect of the country the rarity in Scottish minstrelsy of reference to trees and to birds which frequent the woods? We find songs that celebrate the birches by the river's side,—the "Birks of Tullibole," the "Birks of Aberfeldy," the "Birks of Invermay,"—but there were few trees to incite a poet, and under whose "contiguity of shade" to woo. If there is a strange lack of allusion to birds of any variety in Scottish song we may explain it by an observation of Captain Burt in 1730:[2]—"It has been remarked that here [Inverness] there are few birds except such as build their nests upon the ground, so scarce are trees and hedges." The lark's song and the curlew's shriek were familiar enough in open fields at that time. The cushat's cooing notes were heard in the farmyard, but not so familiar was the voice of the mavis or the blackbird; while in many districts the linnet would have as vainly as Noah's dove sought for a branch whereon to alight in a day's journey.

The sudden awakening of landowners to a knowledge of the usefulness of timber, if not to a sense of the picturesqueness of woodland scenery, which created enthusiasm for planting, belongs chiefly to the second half of the century. For up to 1750 the attempts at planting were hesitating and limited, partly from lack of money, partly from opposition of the farmers and the country-people. Hedges and trees were regarded as their natural enemies, and they bitterly complained that the roots spoilt the ground, the shade killed the grain, and the branches fostered the birds that devoured the crops.[3] In

[1] Anderson's *Agric. in Aberdeenshire*, p. 30.

[2] *Letters from the North of Scotland*, i. p. 7.

[3] Morer's *Acct. of Scot.*, p. 170; Kirke's account in *Early Travellers in Scot.*; Burt's *Letters from the North.* "Even upon the skirts of the Highlands, where the laird has indulged in two or three trees about his house, I have heard the tenant lament the damage done by the droppings and shade of them as well as the space taken up by the trunks and the roots."—i. 324.

vehement dislike and aggressive resistance to this new and dangerous innovation of planting, the people did everything they could to hinder it. Under cover of the night they pulled up the saplings, tore down the branches, and maimed the trunks, and often in the morning the dismayed laird saw that in the darkness the labours and pride of years had been ruthlessly ruined.[1]

This was one of the sorest vexations the landlords and factors had to endure, and to endure without redress. If gangs of people silently and secretly did this havoc, the tenants would not inform upon them, and certainly cared not to check them. The barons of regality might issue their threats, the statutes of the State might renew and increase their penalties; but this crime of arboricide was distressingly frequent, to the discouragement of "improvers."[2]

After the Rebellion of '45 we find gradually a remarkable change coming over the country. It was being dis-

[1] Dr. Edmund Calamy, in his *Own Life*, ii. 162, says that Sir A. Gilmour of Craigmillar, in 1710, told him, on his remarking on the scarcity of wood, that "he was very fond of such plantations, but the people had an incurable aversion to them—having a notion that they spoiled the ground and eat the heart out of the soil." He intimated that it was very common, notwithstanding the strict prohibition of the laws, backed with suitable penalties, for the country people to watch their opportunity and come in great bodies and destroy the trees. In 1726, Cockburn of Ormiston, in reply to his tenant factor, writes: "I must desire you not to be discouraged by what you say of the country people pulling up and spoiling your trees. . . . I further desire you will endeavour to catch one of the malicious people."—Letter given in *Farmer's Magazine*, 1804. Lord Stair's factor in Wigtonshire complains in 1731 to his lordship that "the people will not let the plantations grow."—ii. 183; *Annals of Viscount Stair, and 1st and 2nd Earls of Stair*, by Murray Graham. "A generall humour in the Commons who have a naturall aversion to all manner of planting, and they doe not fail in the night time to cut even with the root the prettiest and strongest trees for staves and plough-goads, and many a one they have destroyed to myselfe; albeit, if they stood not in great awe and fear they would have done greater harm to my plantations."—P. 41, *Glamis Papers*, Scot. Hist. Society; *Proclamation and Penalty in* 1733 *against destroying Trees*, p. 149; *Court-Book of Barony of Urie; Acts of Parliament*, 1716.

[2] Robbie's *Aberdeen: its Traditions and History*, 1873, p. 304. Severe punishment for spoiling trees was meted out. "1710.—J. A. having been convicted of being guilty of cutting a young birch-tree in the enclosures of Hilton, the Justices ordained him to be returned to prison in the Tolbooth, Aberdeen, and to remain for the space of 4 months, to be publicly whipped thro' the town by the common hangman upon first Friday of each month, and remain in prison till he find sufficient caution."

covered at last how advantageous it was to have woods, plantations, and hedges, not merely to beautify the landscape, but to shelter the fields from blasts, and storms, and drifting snow; to drain the soil of its bogs and swamps, to remove the persistent malady of ague from the peasantry, and to modify and soften the rough climate of an unprotected land.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

1750–1800

I

About the middle of the century there arose a new era in the social and economical condition of the country. One by one old prejudices in the Lowlands lost their hold, time-worn customs began to die out and ancient ways to be superseded. The tentative efforts of the previous forty years to improve the soil, and the hard-won experience of enterprising innovators which had sometimes ended in bankruptcy, had at last begun to open the eyes of the most cautious and laggard proprietors to prospects of wealth by adopting agricultural processes which across the border had brought fertility to the land and prosperity to its people.

Previous to this period most of the farms had either been let without leases, or on very short tenure—two or four years—which starved all enterprise. Now, however, as they came into the laird's hands, several mailings or small tenancies were combined into one farm and let to "substantial" tenants, who came under agreement, with a lease of nineteen years,[1] to carry out intelligent modes of agriculture with regard to liming,

[1] Leases did not become common till about 1760. In 1727 Forbes of Culloden, acting for the Duke of Argyll, whose estates he managed, let lands to crofters on leases of nineteen years, held direct from the landlord instead of the tacksman, commuting services to money.—Argyll's *Scotland as it was*, p. 529. In Ayrshire, before middle of century, materials and implements often supplied by landlord, who was paid in kind and services—½ crop going to tenant, ½ to owner—let on leases from 3 to 19 years.—Fullarton's *Survey of Ayrshire*.

ploughing, sowing, the use of artificial grasses, and the due rotation of crops. Under new conditions the fields were enclosed, ground was drained, limed, and manured; ridges were straightened and levelled; waste places were reclaimed from moor and marsh; hedges and dykes were raised; the miserable gray oats—or "small corn"—and bere gave place to prolific grains; and potatoes and turnips in the field provided provender for cattle and food for the people, who were now spared the dread of periodical dearth.

With the gradual abolition of run-rig the several tenants had no longer to wait in the morning till all their neighbours were assembled to join in the clumsy operations, but, as was observed at the end of the century,[1] "every man was late and early at his work, and performed twice as much work as when the work was common." The new carts, with spoke wheels revolving on their axles, took the place of the lumbering "sleds" and "tumblers," and conveyed five times the quantity in one-fifth of the time. Primitive tools and appliances of the country gave way to machinery. The fanners introduced in 1710[2] from Holland by James Meikle superseded the hand-riddle on the winnowing hill or "shealing law," though it was not till 1737 that the second fanner was set up in Roxburghshire; and barley mills at last came into common use about 1750, though they had been set up first in 1710 at Salton, and used nowhere else for forty years. The swing plough,[3] needing only two horses, in time displaced the ponderous wooden construction, with its lumbering, slumbering team of oxen and horses; the roller crushed the clods, which had hitherto been smashed one by one with a wooden mallet; the harness was made of leather, instead of horse's hair, rushes, or heather. The threshing-mill,[4] after many ingenious but futile efforts of others, was brought to admirable practical shape by Andrew Meikle, miller, millwright, and farmer, the

[1] Smith's *Survey of Argyllshire*, 1798, p. 33.

[2] Mause Headrigg's indignation at Cuddie Headrigg's working in the barn "wi' a new-fangled machine for dightin' the corn frae the chaff, thus impiously thwarting the will o' divine providence," is one of Sir Walter Scott's anachronisms, antedating the invention by fifty years.

[3] Invented in 1750 by John Small of Dalkeith.

[4] Smiles's *Lives of Engineers*, vol. i.; Hepburn's *Agric. East Lothian.*

son of James Meikle, who had introduced fanners and barley mills. Constructed about 1776 on a faulty plan, it was completed in 1787, and proved an immense boon to agriculture. By the threshing-mill seventy or eighty bushels of wheat might, to the amazement of the people, be threshed and cleaned in an hour; and besides this saving of time it effected a saving of grain, compared with the flail, to the extent of a hundredth of the corn; equal in value, it was computed, to £2,000,000 in Great Britain.[1] Scotland, at last, by its ingenuity in devising machinery, or its expertness in adopting and adapting experiments, was making up for the sluggishness and inertness of the past; and new implements, intelligent modes of farming, better grain, and more prolific cereals, were revolutionising agricultural life.

The leaders in these great changes were not the tenants. They had neither capital nor enterprise enough to try anything, and not personal interest enough to do anything, so long as so much of the land was common and leases were uncommon. Noblemen and gentry of energetic minds had for many years been anxious to improve their estates, and had even brought from England ploughmen and farmers to teach their countrymen the ways which had been so successful in the south. In 1723[2] the Society of Improvers of Knowledge of Agriculture was formed, its most active spirit being the secretary, Maxwell of Arkland, whose efforts to improve the land ruined his own fortune, brought him to insolvency, and reduced the "Lady Arkland" to keep a little shop in the Edinburgh High Street. The society included two hundred enterprising gentlemen, and in the *Select Society Transactions* published by Maxwell[3] we find the very rudiments of husbandry treated as startling problems. "Questions," "Answers," and papers are there found by peers, judges, and lairds, on fallow, draining, turnips, suggestions on sowing whin seed, manuring with

[1] In about twenty years after there were 350 threshing-mills in East Lothian.

[2] The writer of *Essay on Ways and Means of Enclosing, Fallowing, etc.*, 1729, strongly recommends the bringing of English workmen to teach English husbandry, and especially lauds the Devonshire method, which is called "Denshiring,"—improvement of the land by fire.—P. 152.

[3] Edinburgh, 1743.

sea-ware, or improving ground overrun with rushes, and such like. Though the society died out, its influence lived on. Among the improvers in the first half-century were the daughter of Lord Peterborough, who became Duchess of Gordon,[1] and carried English ways to the North with immense energy and success; the Countess of Haddington, in the beginning of the century; and Susanna, Lady Eglinton, in the middle.

There were parish ministers experimenting on their glebes and the acres they rented to increase a scanty income, trying new methods; like the grotesque genius Wilkie of Cramond, known in literature by his forgotten *Epigoniad*, for which his countrymen proclaimed him "immortal," but known in less cultured rural quarters as "Potato Wilkie," from his enthusiastic culture of a more successful and digestible fruit of his labour. Scientific men were also busy improving, like Dr. Hutton the geologist, who brought ploughmen from Dorset to initiate his workmen in Duns, and is said to have been the first to use the two-horse plough. Lawyers and judges joined the ranks of farmers, such as Lord Kames,[2] who at Blair Drummond began to cast the moss from the marshes in the swampy district of Kincardineshire, to drain the spongy soil, to encourage the tardy use of lime and marl, and at the venerable age of eighty published his shrewd, if whimsical, *Gentleman Farmer* to enlighten his countrymen; while a brother judge, Lord Stonefield, was striving to bribe tenants in Dumbartonshire to sow turnips. Nobles and members of Parliament wrote from London to their factors lengthy epistles, giving the latest hints from Middlesex, and expecting all their recommendations to be carried out for adopting impossible projects at home. Trade meanwhile was spreading over the country; villages in course of time rose into towns; places once un-

[1] "I remember on that lady's first coming to Scotland I heard she caused bring down English ploughs and skilful plowmen to fallow. I can trace that most useful and valuable operation no higher in Scotland than that excellent lady's coming among us. . . . Scotland is indebted to the Duchess for right method of making hay, planting, laying out grounds for gardening and parterres, transforming old Gothick architecture to the beauty and convenience of the latest Italian houses prevailing with gentry in northern shires, to enclose, drain, and plant," etc.—*Essay on Enclosing, Fallowing, etc.*, 1729.

[2] Tytler's *Life of Lord Kames*, ii. 30.

known became active centres of industry; the linen trade, shipping, woollen factories, were giving labour to large numbers of people drawn from rural districts; and with the increase of commerce and manufactures there grew up a demand alike for grain and cattle for home consumption and for export, all which gave stimulus to landlords to greater energy and fuller cultivation.

Perhaps no legislative measure helped forth this object more thoroughly than the Turnpike Act of 1751, an Act which assessed farmers and proprietors in equal proportion for the maintenance of efficient public roads; thereby securing means of communication between every district and every town by the carts, which could now go easily over once almost impassable tracks.

The Rebellion of '45 proved a blessing in disguise to the Scottish people, for it was one of the most important causes of the opening up and consequent cultivation of the north country. It brought the Highlands more in touch with the southern counties; it promoted trade, traffic, intercourse beyond the once inaccessible "line." The Disarming Act changed lazy vassals into sturdy workmen; they were forced to change their swords to ploughshares and their targets into tops for butter firkins, as Boswell on his tour was informed. The forfeiture of the rebel estates threw into the market and into the hands of energetic men lands which had for centuries been ill governed, impoverished petty kingdoms, where chiefs reigned over hordes of lazy, half-starved subjects. The abolition of hereditary jurisdictions also brought from Government compensation of over £152,000, which was an immense sum in the estimation of impecunious gentlemen, to devote, if they chose, to bettering their estates.

Without money, however, nothing could be done to improve the soil, and so long as rents were to a large extent paid in kind there was little money to spend. The system of payment of rents began now to be changed, and lairds were not obliged to sell for what it might bring the stored-up rent of oats and barley from their girnals; and at last, and for the first time, they had silver which they could use for practical purposes. It is obvious that chiefs, so long as they were paid

in sheep, capons, oats, although they might have enormous tracts of country and multitudinous retainers, could do little or nothing for their barren soil. Adam Smith remarks that in the Rebellion, Cameron of Lochiel, though he could carry into the field for Prince Charlie 800 of his own people, had only a rental in money of £500.[1] These were not the men to lay out capital in altering the condition of estates which were measured by hundreds of square miles.

The establishment of banks about 1760 in country towns proved a very important element in the future economical progress of the country. County gentlemen were by this institution enabled to get money on good security, which they could use to their advantage.[2] Tenants united as securities for each other, and farmers could be accommodated with means to stock their farms and lime their acres; while, owing to the extension of paper-money, people in towns were ready to advance cash on easy terms. Nor must there be omitted another fruitful source from which the taste and means for improvement came. That was the return of Scotsmen who had made their lacs of rupees in the East India Company's service, and invested part of their fortunes in buying estates and social position in their native land. These nabobs had money to spend; they had no hereditary prejudices to trammel them; their superciliousness to natives in the East did not render them delicate to susceptibilities of old farmers at home, and they changed at their will and improved where they chose with lavish hand.[3] Prosperous Glasgow merchants—Virginia traders—also bought estates, and with an eye to business made the most of their new lands and novel position as lairds.

The last of the many contributory influences to agricultural change which may be mentioned was the "Montgomery Act" of 1770—a measure due to the Lord Advocate, Sir James Montgomery. This statute enabled owners of entailed estates to enclose, to drain, to build, to plant, or in other ways permanently improve the property, by authorising them to

[1] *Wealth of Nations*, chap. viii.

[2] Ramsay's *Scot. and Scots*, ii. 252; Fullarton's *Survey of Ayrshire*, p. 18.

[3] "No less than eight estates of considerable value have in my recollection been bought in Roxburghshire by gentlemen who have returned from East Indies."—Somerville's *Life*, p. 360.

settle on their successors the burden of an equitable proportion of the expense—the profits of which they should reap. This relief from legal restriction gave an invaluable stimulus to the cause of agriculture, to the consequent enlargement of the incomes of the lairds.

II

While enterprising gentlemen and vigorous tenants, eager to be "improvers," were striving in many parts of the country to supersede old worn-out methods, their laudable efforts were not always thoroughly successful. In their impatience to make more money and augment their rent rolls at a bound, not a few made egregious mistakes, which greatly rejoiced the admirers of old times—the despisers of new-fangled ways. These sceptical onlookers saw with satisfaction that when the lofty crooked ridges were levelled the productive soil was buried in the deep ditches, furrows, and baulks that it filled up; while the backs of the old rigs were left bare and stony and barren for generations. Indeed, for fifty years after the ancient ridges could be traced as zig-zagging lines of sterility through the fields. The enthusiast for enclosing broke up the land into countless subdivisions, making ludicrously minute fields of two or three acres, wasting ground by needless boundaries of hedge and dyke and ditch. So, without discrimination, the agriculturists, with the unbounded zeal of converts, put every scheme they read or heard of into operation. Lairds read the writings of every English theorist, the pamphlet of each crotcheteer. They tried in Caithness methods which suited to perfection the sunny meadows of Surrey; they expected Stirlingshire to produce crops as early as Kent. It was admirable in theory, as it was excellent in practice,[1] in the light, well-drained soil of the south to plough in autumn instead of dawdling to spring; but it was at first disastrous to plough in deep till-clay land, which, as Lady Pitlyal of *Mystifications* has said, "greets a' winter and grins a' summer," drenched with rain, undried through "haars," during which the seed rotted when it was wet, and

[1] Ramsay's *Scot. and Scots*, ii. 241.

through which the blades could not pierce when dry.[1] These blunders were a great solace to farmers, who naturally winced when noblemen brought ploughmen from Norfolk and Dorset to show them how to do their work, and in broad English dialect ridiculed venerable narrow Scots ways. Nor was there dissatisfaction when veterans observed that while the national thistle disappeared under a cleanly system, foreign docks appeared with the rye grass and clover in their stead. Enmity was full in many districts at the harsh and brusque eviction of many an old tenant family to make way for those who would carry out their lordships' whims.[2]

Amidst the flow of prosperity and wealth, which came gradually, there were several changes which at the time—but only temporarily—proved disastrous among the rural population. The abolition of small farms or "mailings," paying a rental of from £7 to £17, and the sweeping away of cottages where maybe eight tenants lived, to make way for their amalgamation into one large farm, thrust many people out of employment, forced many to drift into towns, and many to emigrate. This hardship, of course, fell more heavily on the farming class than on their work-people, who quickly got occupation in the industries which were everywhere springing up. Those who suffered most were the tenants,[3] whose forbears had held the same "paffle" for generations undisturbed, who were dismissed to make room for speculative men from Annandale and Dumfriesshire, and many a farmer was reduced to become a farm servant under the new master. Far worse was the case in the North, where 100 tenants might be displaced to form a sheep-walk, and the change was resisted at times by riots and defiance of the people, who drove the sheep away, and were punished for their violence by transportation for nine years.

[1] Fullarton's *Survey of Ayrshire*, p. 8; Ure's *Dumbartonshire*, p. 104; Ure's *East Kilbride*, p. 180.

[2] When in 1760 Mungo Campbell, the poaching exciseman, murdered Lord Eglinton, there was more sympathy for the exciseman than for the noble, who had made himself unpopular alike by the misimprovement of his life and the still more irritating improvement of his estates, his changes of old customs, his interference with old tenants.—Chambers' *Minor Antiquities of Edinburgh*, p. 163, 1833.

[3] Stewart's *Sketches of Highlands*, i. 126.

These old tenants, reduced to the position of day labourers, took crofts by the sea-shore of two or three sandy acres, and eked out a precarious living by fishing.[1] With farmers the hardship was both real and lasting in many instances.

It is not to be overlooked that the reclamation of waste lands from moor and bog gave more occupation to active men than the old system ever did. Eventually it was not the work-people who were reduced in numbers, for there was more work to do than in lazy days—more money to spend in agricultural labour; and the chief difference was that the new school preferred married men who lived in cottages with their families—by the way, much to the improvement of rustic morality—to young men who lived with the farmer and sat at his board, who were sons of village weavers and tailors.[2]

There was no institution which had added so powerfully to the importance of nobles, and especially Highland chiefs, as that of hereditable jurisdiction. Barons and chiefs had for centuries possessed certain seignorial rights of administering law and repressing crime throughout their own districts. They held courts of regality, in which they or their baron bailies, who served as assessors, acted as judges with, and sometimes without, a jury of their own vassals or tenants. Having power over life and limb, they did not hesitate to exercise it, and unfortunate culprits, at the whim or judgment of the hereditary sheriff, might be confined to a fetid dungeon, without appeal or redress against any miscarriage of justice. Their position was one not merely of dignity, but of considerable profit;[3] but its abolition in 1748, and the substitution of responsible legal sheriffs of counties, was a great relief to tenants, who had had

[1] Lettice's *Tour*, p. 364; Walker's *Hebrides and Highlands*, ii. 380; Stewart's *Sketches*, vol. i.; Pennant's *Tour*, ii. 281-3.

[2] Against the notion that the new system resulted in permanent depopulation see Ramsay's *Scot. and Scots*, ii. 209. — Hepburn's *East Lothian; Farmer's Magazine*, p. 380, 1801.

[3] As duties or "customs" to the hereditary sheriff or bailie of barony, each farmer supplied 2 ploughs, 4 pair horses and harness for 1 day; and 6 shearers in harvest for 1 day, 6 hens, 1 threave cow. 8 hours for peat loads—this afterwards commuted into money.—Agnew's *Hereditary Sheriffs*, 527; Anderson's *State of Society and Knowledge in Highlands*, p. 104; Stewart's *Sketches of the Highlands*, i. p. 110.

to pay the potentate so many "customs" of hens, days' work, and peat, per annum, for the privilege of very bad law.

The serious social result of depriving Highland chiefs of their ancient privileges, and the disarming of their vassals after the '45, was the disappearance of the old patriarchal interest and pride which they had taken in their clansmen. Formerly they had plumed themselves on the number of their retainers; but they now descended from the high state of kinglets, vain of the number of their subjects, to that of lairds vulgarly eager for the increase of their rents. They sought to rid themselves of the superfluous population, dismissed sub-tenants at will, and installed tenants on lease; they gave up the tacksmen, who were members of the clan, for Lowland farmers who cared nothing for the people; they deported inhabitants and imported sheep. No longer supreme in their mountain castles, and bereft of feudal power and pomp, they became acute tradesmen. The highest bidder came, and the unremunerative crofter went.[1] These landed gentry had more money now at their disposal to spend, but they spent it in society; their "hearts" might be "in the Highlands," but their bankers were in London. And the hearts of the people turned from their old chiefs. Sometimes, in their eagerness to make fortunes, the chiefs overreached themselves. They thought to uproot in a year the inveterate customs of ages, and tried to overcome all at once indolence and improvidence engrained in the race. Expecting from the barren tracts of Ross-shire the abundant returns of the fertile acres of the Lothians, they overrented their land and overestimated their incomes. Not seldom bankruptcy was the fate of men hasting to be rich, who, as Pennant expressed it, "emptied the sack before it was filled." "I have lived in woful times," said an Argyllshire chief in 1788; "when I was young the only question asked concerning a man of rank was, How many men lived on his estate? then it was, How many black cattle it could keep? but now it is, How many sheep will it carry."[2]

[1] Mackenzie's *Report on Agric. of Ross;* Stewart's *Sketches of Highlands*, i. 160-200; Robertson's *Agric. of Inverness.*

[2] Scott's *Works*, "Periodical Criticism," iv. 32, 1835.

III

Troubles always attend economic measures which promote social progress, for hardship is the inevitable accompaniment of every process of development; and in the struggle for existence the weak must suffer, that the fittest may survive. The surest signs of progress in any industry are, however, to be found in the increase alike of gains of the master and wages of the servant, and here the evidence is striking, even startling. In a few years,[1] land which had for more than a century been let at the same rent of 1s. 6d. to 3s. an acre, rose to 21s. in Berwickshire; land in Perthshire, which had brought at its highest 5s., in nine years advanced to 17s. an acre, and in 1784 had bounded up to 45s.; and in Ayrshire, ground which had of old been let for 5 lbs. of butter per acre, easily let for 25s. after being drained and limed. In the Carse of Gowrie land which had let at the supposed high rent of 6s. 8d. an acre had risen in twenty years (in 1783) to £6.[2]

Nor was this advance of rent, enormous as it was, effected at the cost of the farmers or the people, for the records of those days prove the reverse. The statement of a witness from Perthshire is confirmed by experience in every district. In Fortingal the "rents in 1750 were not much above £1500, and the people were starving; now (1793) they pay £4600, and there is fulness of bread."[3] When estates went into the market the change in rural conditions was made evident by the prices paid for them. For generations, so long as antiquated systems of husbandry continued, their value remained the same; but when the agricultural revolution came they increased as if by magic. For instance, an estate in Banffshire which had

[1] Low and Bruce's *Agric. of Berwickshire*, p. 104; *Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Longforgan, xix. 525; Symington, viii. 397: "Formerly land let at 1s. 6d. an acre to tenants verging on bankruptcy." In Kilwinning, in 1742, the average was 3s., in 1792 it was 18s.—*Stat. Acct.*, Kilwinning, Alloway; Stewart's *Sketches* p. 141.

[2] Donaldson's *Carse of Gowrie*. In Arrochar, land let for £8 in 1740 was, in 1790, let as sheep-walks for £80.—Ure's *Dumbartonshire*, p. 15.

[3] *Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Fortingal.

in 1647 a rental of £455 had crept slowly up by 1730 only to £555, but in fifty years the rental had risen to £2800; another in Dumfriesshire produced in 1760 £950 rental, and in 1790 it went up to £4750.[1] Such instances, taken almost at random, show the rapid increase in productiveness of the soil and value for the land.

In the Highlands, wherever cultivation or cattle rearing had been introduced, similar results followed in its train. Glenelg estate, for example, which had been bought of old for a few thousand merks, had in 1786 a rental of £600, and twenty-five years later its value had increased so enormously that it was sold for £100,000.[2] Another estate put up for sale by the Court of Session, with a rental of less than £30, was bought for what was considered the high sum of £1200, to be sold again in 1825 for £25,000. Cases abound of the value of estates which for 100 years hardly increased at all going in thirty years up to five or even eight times the rental of the past.[3]

Along with the steady development of landlords' fortunes there went on an equivalent rise in farmers' profits, for they found ample recompense for all their outlay on the soil and the larger rent of the land. While the prices of corn increased materially, owing to increased demand in an industrial population and to the excellence of the grain,—so different from the miserable old gray oats and bere,—the amount produced under the new husbandry had increased in volume. Besides that, there was produce of turnips and potatoes, artificial grasses, sheep and oxen, to increase the tenant's gains. For the sale of his goods there were now easy means of communication and transit by land and sea; and products for which of old he could not get a market—shut up as he had been, by want of conveyance and badness of roads, from the world—were carried to any town, and profits rose every year. So far from tenants being oppressed by the enhanced rents, they laid by, if they

[1] *Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Banff, xx. 397; Longforgan, xix. 522; Troqueer, i. 195. In Caithness, grazings let in 1794 for £87, in 1803 were let for £600.—*Farmer's Mag.* 1804, p. 5.

[2] Anderson's *State of Highlands*, p. 132.

[3] Rental of land in Scotland in 1748 estimated at £822,857 (*Scots Mag.* 1748). In 1813 it amounted to £6,285,500.—Chalmers' *Caledonia*, vii. 11.

were wise, no little money, and in many instances were able to purchase their land and even to buy considerable estates.[1]

At the same time the profits from rearing stock rose with great and rapid strides. Instead of the lank, half-starved sheep with as little flesh on their bones as they had wool on their backs, selling at 2s. 6d. or 3s. each, there were larger animals amply fleeced, producing four times the former amount of wool, and sold at from 9s. to 18s. each. Instead of the little, wretched, black breed of cattle which weighed, when fattened, only eleven or twelve stones, and cows which yielded three or perhaps two pints of milk a day, there were the Ayrshire or Galloway cattle weighing twenty-four stones, and cows producing twelve pints (Scots).[2] No wonder prices went up in equivalent measure: that horses, which formerly could be got from £3 to £7, could not be procured at the end of the century for less than £15 or £20; and cattle, Highland and Lowland, had doubled or trebled in value.[3]

When these changes had occurred with new life, new energy, new interest, Scottish agriculture, so far from being a byword, became a model for imitation by England—its skill, its activity, its methods, its success, became matters of fame; and when one recalls the contemptuous terms in which travellers from the south formerly spoke of the old miserable husbandry, and the indolent ways of the people, it is curious to find in 1790 an eminent Scots agriculturist complacently speaking in similar terms of the habits beyond the Border: "An observing man who was bred in Scotland is astonished when he sees in England the languor and indolence which almost everywhere prevail in regard to agriculture."[4] In the next century,

[1] "When the change took place a farmer could with a dozen years' industry be able to purchase the land he rented, which many did."—Allan Cunningham, quoted in Lockhart's *Life of Burns*, p. 194. "More estates have been bought lately in the district round Perth by farmers than by any other class of men. Many estates particularly have been purchased by Carse farmers."—Hall's *Travels*, i. 265.

[2] *Stat. Acct.*, Cambuslang, Kilmartin, viii. 109.

[3] Ramsay's *Scot. and Scots.*, ii. 223. In 1723, in Crieff, 30,000 cattle at the tryst were transferred to English drovers; at end of century there were 100,000 sold.—Nimmo's *Stirlingshire*, ii. 612.

[4] Anderson's *Agric. of Aberdeenshire*, p. 151. "Old people say that one servant does as much work as two in former times."—*Stat. Acct. of Scot.*, Crawford, iv. 609.

instead of ploughmen coming from Dorset to teach Scots farmers to work, East Lothian stewards and ploughmen were taken to instruct English yokels to farm.[1]

The increase of population, the growth of towns in which the chief industries were centred, caused larger demand for provisions of all kinds, and the tenants easily requited themselves for bigger rents by bigger prices. Meanwhile the peasantry shared in the general prosperity, and by 1790 their earnings were exactly double what they had been in the middle of the century, having risen to £14 or £15 a year.[2]

With the improvement in wages went a marked improvement in social condition and intellectual character—there was more spirit, more energy, more alertness in mind and body. The miserably lethargic manner, the prematurely aged look, gradually disappeared in every district where soil was under new conditions of husbandry. "I travelled," said one[3] of the most intelligent of observers in 1790, "through some places where not many years ago the people were wretchedly poor, want sat upon every brow, hunger was painted on every face; neither their tattered clothes nor their miserable cottages were a sufficient shelter from the cold; now the labourers have put off the long clothing, the tardy pace, the lethargic look of their fathers, for the short doublet, the linen trousers, the quick pace of men who are labouring for their own behoof, and work up to the spirit of their cattle, and the rapid revolution of the threshing-machine." The "blue rags" in which farmers and workmen had before been clad gave way

[1] *Memoirs of a Highland Lady.* "In the beginning of the nineteenth century Grant of Rothiemurchus, on the estate at Hertfordshire, is establishing Scots farming with a Scots grieve to teach rotation of crops, deep ploughing, hay making, corn cut with scythe, stall-fed cattle."—P. 55.

[2] Ploughmen at the close of the century got £6 : 10s. to £7; while the married ploughmen, besides their cottage, had £6 in money, 6½ bolls of meal, and other "gains," which made their income about £14 or £15—double what they had forty years before. In 1790 they had from £2 : 5s. to £3. Day labourers advanced from 6d. in summer (working from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M.) and 5d. in winter (from sunrise to sunset) to from 10d. to 1s.—*Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Alva, Dailly; Ramsay, ii. 211. The wages, of course, varied much in different districts. "Bounties of women consisted of 6 ells of coarse linen or harn; 5 ells of grey cloth, 2 ells plaiding or coarse flannel, and two pairs of shoes."—Robertson's *Agric.*, Mid-Lothian, p. 40.

[3] Robertson's *Agric. of Perthshire*, p. 65.

to comfortable garments of a more prosperous age. The rough plaiding of the ploughman of previous generations was discarded, and he went well clad and shod to work; the woollen shirts, worn unchanged for months together, gave way to linen—though older-fashioned folk alleged that this substitution of linen shirts for woollen was the cause of a great increase of colds and rheumatism amongst the people. Behold him in 1790 in Sunday attire: "In his coat of blue cloth at 5s. 6d. a yard, velveret vest and corduroy breeches; white cotton stockings, calf-skin shoes; black silk shoulder knots, shirt with ruffles at the breast, white muslin cravat, fringed, hat worth 8s. to 10s.,"[1] a watch in his fob, though forty years before not one was to be found in a whole parish except on the laird's and minister's persons. This, of course, describes the best specimen of ploughman in the most advanced districts, but even the poorest had greatly improved. Young women,[2] no longer satisfied with the rough woollen stuffs, wore cotton dresses, and, though barefooted on week-days, appeared well-shod, in cotton dress, duffle cloaks, and bonnets in church. The farmers' daughters and wives, contemptuous of home-made webs, had their gowns of silk, and their fashions from Edinburgh, and lived in an ambitious style which as yet fitted them badly. The plainest farmer was now clad in English broadcloth, and could boast of a hat; and the rich farmer, assuming new manners, prided himself on his dress, on his house, and his blood-horse.[3] With changed conditions had gone from the people much of the dirt and most of the olden squalor, though there remained much room for improvement. From them also had vanished many a superstition; and brownies, elves, and fairies only survived in fireside stories in the winter nights.[4]

[1] Robertson's *Agric. of Mid-Lothian*, p. 28; Roger's *Agric. of Forfarshire*, p. 3.

[2] "Formerly the women appeared in church in bed blankets or tartan plaids; now they wear scarlet plaids and duffle cloaks and bonnets. Old home-made dresses superseded by English cloth for Sunday and finer stuffs for every-day clothing."—*Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Logie Pert; Bathgate, i. 356.

[3] Allan Cunningham in Lockhart's *Life of Burns*, p. 199.

[4] *Farmer's Mag.* 1804, p. 390; Robertson's *Mid-Lothian*, p. 2. To the proposition to clean the churn before putting in the cream, "Na, na," returned Mrs. M'Clarty, "that wadna be canny, ye ken. Naebody would clean their kirn for ony consideration."—Hamilton's *Cottagers of Glenburnie*, 1804, p. 391.

Other things had changed in the social condition of the people—and had changed vastly for the better. The fare was no longer restricted to the monotonous oat and barley-meal diet in its various, but not varied, forms. In the kailyard there was no longer a meagre supply of vegetables—chiefly cabbage and greens; but turnips, carrots, potatoes, and many others in which they took pride and loved to cultivate, along with the currant and gooseberry bushes, and roses, flowers, and beloved peppermint. The use of these vegetables had, it was said, a markedly favourable effect upon the health of the peasantry.[1] The price of meat had risen, owing to the quantity now consumed in towns, and by 1780 it cost 3d. or 4d. a pound, instead of 1d. or 1½d. of thirty years before. But in spite of advance of price far more was used in rural places, and the ploughmen usually had meat twice or thrice a week, instead of partaking of it only on those occasions when an aged, diseased, or starved sheep was found dead in the fields, or a cow expired in the stalls.[2]

The common drink of the people of old had been ale, which was brewed in every farmhouse, and sold in every change-house or tavern; it was drunk everywhere by the peasantry, and, indeed, by every class. But by the imposition of the malt tax, the production of it was greatly affected; and partly owing to the increasing cost and to the gradual influx of spirits, smuggled or legal, the use of ale diminished, while whisky—in 1780 only 10d. a quart, on which no excise was being paid—came more and more into use, and where formerly the workmen were regaled with "twopenny," now they were presented with whisky.

Yet another beverage came into vogue as a dangerous rival to ale. The introduction of tea was met with animosity by the haters of new-fashioned beverages and the patriotic lovers of old native products. Town councils, heritors, and ministers equally denounced it, and parishes afflicted with smuggling entered into resolutions to abstain from tea, just as people take

[1] Walker's *Hebrides and Highlands*, i. 98, 99.

[2] In 1793, in East Lothian, there was broth of pot barley and butcher meat for dinners.—Hepburn's *Agric. of East Lothian.* In Elgin and Moray there was meat on Sundays and holidays.—Donaldson's *Agric. in Moray and Elgin*, p. 25.

pledges to-day against alcoholic drinks. In 1744 the heritors of East Lothian complained that "the luxurious and expensive way of living has shamefully crept in upon all classes of the people, who, neglecting the good and wholesome produce of our own country, are got into the habit of an immoderate use of French wines and spirits";[1] as also, "that the drinking of tea, and especially among people of the lower rank, has arrived at an extravagant excess to the hurt of private families by loss of their time, increase of their expense, and negligence of a diet more suitable to their health and station."[2] Farmers and lairds in parishes entered into solemn bonds, under self-imposed penalties, not to drink a drug so demoralising and pernicious. But in spite of all opposition, in spite of its cost, it won its way into the affections and homes of all classes—not to the hurt, but to the advantage of the people, who found in it a substitute for far less innocent drink.[3]

Improvements were going on in the homes as well as in the food and clothing of the agricultural classes. As time wore on a great change came over the hovels without chimneys to let out the smoke or glazed windows to keep out the blast, with the foul air of cows in the one end of the house, the people in the other, and the poultry on the rafters, with the heather roofs, which made the abode a more comfortable

[1] 1740.—Wigtown Town Council resolve to discourage smuggling and tea-drinking.—*Hereditary Sheriffs*, p. 530. The example set by the parish of Swinton of subjecting themselves to penalties in case of any breach of these resolutions was followed by the barony of Brisbane and Col. Fullarton and his tenants in Ayrshire. These last in their bond speak of tea thus: "We, being all farmers by profession, think it needless to restrain ourselves formally from indulging in the foreign and consumptive luxury called *tea;* for when we consider the slender constitution of many of the higher rank, amongst whom it is most used, we conclude that it would be an improper diet to qualify us for the more robust and manly parts of our business, and therefore only give our testimony against it and leave the enjoyment of it altogether to those who can afford to be weak, indolent, and useless."—Morren's *Annals of Gen. Assembly*, i. 61.

[2] *Considerations of Present State of Scot.*, Edin., 1744.

[3] When gradually beer and "twopenny" gave way to tea, the people transferred the terms for brewing their home-made ale to the process of making their tea; the name for the operation of "mashing" or "masking" when the hot water was added to the malt, was given to infusing, by adding water to the tea. "Brewing tea" still an expression used in south-east counties.—*Stat. Acct.*, i. 87.

home for rats than for human beings. A more decent order of things began. Even outlying districts like Rannoch in Perthshire shared in the happy progress. In 1750 the bulk of the tenants had no such things as beds. They lay on the ground, with a little heather or ferns under them, on rough blankets. Their houses could only be entered on all fours, and then it was impossible to stand upright. But in 1790 they are reported as decently clean, well-clad, in lighted houses built of stone. The life, habits, food, dwellings of the people had undergone throughout a great part of Scotland a marvellous transformation.[1]

IV

Not less a change was undergone in the physical aspect of the country and the appearance of the landscape. The purple heather and yellow whins were giving way to corn; bogs and marshes were turning into pasture; bleak moors were being covered with wide forests of pine or woods of larch, ash, and elms. The landscape, so universally monotonous and bare, with occasional patches of elders, birch, and stunted oak by river brinks, or clumps of ash and elm around country mansions or churchyards—making the surrounding scenes the drearier by contrast—became beautified and diversified by belts of plantations to shield the fields, thorn hedges by the road, and forests miles wide in circumference.

In 1735, the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Science, and Agriculture had sought to overcome the perverse dislike of farmers to trees, by offering prizes of £10 to any who should plant the largest number (not less than 1000) of timber trees—oak, ash, elm—in hedgerows before December 1736. But in a short while, so far from its being necessary to stimulate planting, it seemed impossible to curb the rage for it. Lairds and nobles had now discovered a use for their timber, especially for their larches, in new industries and shipyards, which were rapidly springing up; and they had acquired a taste for woods as enhancing the beauty as well as the profits of their estates. Grant of Monymusk, continuing

[1] *Stat. Acct.*, Fortingal, ii. 458.

till old age the work he had begun as a youth in 1716, planted his 50 millions, chiefly of spruce fir. Lord Findlater began in 1767 to plant in Nairnshire eleven millions in a desert of his estates; and Lord Moray,[1] with over twelve million beeches, oaks, elms, at the same time planted his fine woods at Darnaway. About 1750 and 1760 began to be planted at Taymouth and Scone—hitherto treeless—those woods which are so magnificent to-day. Fifty years after the tiny larch-saplings had been handed out of Mr. Menzies's portmanteau to the Duke of Atholl in 1727, Duke John—the "planting Duke"—with a keen eye to business as well as for the picturesque, covered 16,000 acres with twenty-seven million of larches.[2] Young lords and law lords, lairds great and small, took to planting and pruning as formerly they had taken to hunting or drinking, and shrewd proprietors shared the views of the prototype of the Laird of Dumbiedykes on his deathbed: "Jock, when ye hae naething else to dae, ye may aye be sticking in a tree; it 'll be growing, Jock, when ye are sleeping." Thus began a new industry for trade and a new source of profits to landowners.[3] Every laird with a £100 rental reared his thousands. On Saturday he planted; and on Sunday, during the soporific discourses in kirk, he planned his planting for Monday. When a minister rebuked his heritor for running after Whitfield, he got the effectual answer: "Sir, when I hear you preach I am planting trees; but during the whole of Mr. Whitfield's sermon I have not time to plant one."[4] It was after the middle of the century that the passion for raising woods and enclosing by hedges reached its height, transforming the appearance of the country; "inso-much," says a writer in 1797,[5]—with delightful complacency and bland exaggeration,—"that a native who had left this country in 1760 on his return at this date would find him-

[1] T. Donaldson's *Agriculture of Nairnshire.*

[2] Hunter's *Woods of Perthshire*, p. 15.

[3] Molendinnar Saw-mill at Glasgow was erected by Mr. Fleming in 1751—the first timber merchant who introduced into general use Scots-grown fir for common purposes, such as making coffins, packing-boxes, house lathing, etc.—*Glasgow Past and Present*, iii. 129.

[4] Tyerman's *Life of Whitfield*, ii. 525.

[5] Brown's *Hist. of Glasgow*, ii. 194.

self only to be directed by the geography of the surrounding mountains."[1] Even in the wilder parts of the land a change was proceeding rapidly. By the end of the century in Ross-shire there flourished forests of pine and oak, extending over many miles, where fifty years before there were only bare and barren tracts. The clothing of the ground with woods and forests seemed even to affect the climate; it was said[2] to have become milder than in former days, when there was a drenched soil and unprotected wastes.

But in 1773, when Dr. Samuel Johnson made his ever memorable "tour to the Hebrides,"[3] enormous districts were still untouched, especially along the route northwards and westwards by which he pursued his journey. Other districts, again, had only been begun to be planted a few years before, and the saplings put in about 1765 in Nairn, Elgin, and Moray by several noblemen can only have been a few feet high. There was hardly any timber about Inverness. "Aberdeen-shire, for miles backward from the sea-coast," says a writer so late as 1794, "is perfectly destitute of trees, and Buchan is proverbially bare, so that in many parts of it Churchill's description is literally true: 'Far as the eye can reach no tree is seen.'"[4]

Dr. Johnson, therefore, can hardly be accused of gross exaggeration in his contemptuous references to the barrenness and bleakness of the landscape in much of the land he traversed. At the same time, he failed to give any indication of or any credit for that planting enthusiasm which was in the course of a generation to falsify his descriptions and to unsting his satire.

V

In this survey of the changes which had come over the rural condition of the country and the circumstances of the

[1] It is apparent that Sir Walter Scott's statement is quite mistaken: "The love of planting, which has become almost a passion, is much to be ascribed to Dr. Johnson's sarcasm."—Croker's *Correspondence*, ii. 34.

[2] Robertson's *Agric. of Perthshire.*

[3] Boswell's *Tour to the Hebrides*, and Johnson's *Journey*, *passim.*

[4] Douglas, *East Coast of Scotland*, 1782, p. 276; Newte's *Tour*, p. 192.

people, we must guard ourselves from having an exaggerated estimate of the extent of the progress, and from having too roseate a notion of the improvement alike in land and in inhabitants. Widespread as was the progress, it was not universal; rapid in some places, in others it was almost imperceptible at the close of the century. In the outlying quarters of even Lowland counties there was little alteration, and from Forfarshire to Dumfries there were large districts where the run-rig system, with its antiquated and obstructive fashions, still prevailed; where much land lay still unenclosed, and where roads remained impassable during a great part of the year.[1] Still in many quarters lumbered the olden plough with its eight or ten oxen, four abreast, preparing the soil for the "gray oat" or "small corn," which was obsolete in every other civilised part of the land.

While these things were done even in the low country matters were far more backward, as might be expected, in the Highlands. "Speaking generally," says one who travelled over the land in agricultural interests in 1790, "the Highlands may be said to lie in an open state"; even the properties were unmarched by dykes. In Caithness and Sutherland the roads were still unmade, and in order to get fuel they had to go for miles over the moorland—so far off that they required to remain out all night in the open air, returning next day with their scanty loads of ten or twelve peats in every creel borne by the dwarfish horses, all in a line, each tied to its fellow by the tail. There, as in the Hebrides, the people persisted in using "graddan bread"—obtained by setting fire to oats and barley in the sheaves, and then grinding in the stone querns the parched grains left when the straw was blown away.[2] With the exception of a few oases of barley, oats, and natural grass, Pennant, about 1770, found the land "an immense

[1] In Dumfriesshire "more land open than there is enclosed."—Bryce Johnstone's *Agric. of Dumfriesshire*, 1794. In Dumbartonshire "a third of the land lies open."—Ure's *Agric. of Dumbartonshire*, 1793, p. 19. In Perthshire "three-fifths of land is open."—Robertson's *Agric. of Perthshire*, p. 60. "Infield and outfield continued still considerably."—T. Johnstone's *Agric. of Tweeddale*, p. 39; Marshall's *Central Highlands*, p. 40.

[2] Walker's *Hebrides and Highlands*, ii. 370; Pennant's *Tour*, i. 202; J. L. Buchanan's *Travels in West Hebrides*, 1793.

morass." The inhabitants had themselves done their utmost to make their country waste, and assisted nature by their stupidity to make it barren. They denuded the ground of its best pasture, using the turf, instead of the too abundant stones, for making their fences and building their huts,[1] that were dark, dank, and malodorous, from whose mouldering walls and roofs there fell on the inmates the dust of the clay and the insects from the rotting sods. As an Englishman gazed from the naked ground to the green covered huts, he remarked, with astonishment, that in Sutherland "the people made their houses of the grass, and fed their cattle on the stones."[2] In truth the crofters concerned themselves extremely little as to how the soil was treated; for whenever they had got all the good out of the ground, and done all possible harm to it, they removed the doors and rafters from the hovel, which at once fell into a dirty heap, and quietly settled elsewhere, where they rebuilt a hut and again destroyed the soil. All over the North were to be seen these heaps of earth and stones which were the remains of decayed turf cots and fences. "There are immense tracts,"[3] lamented a witness of all this, "that have been robbed of their surface throughout great parts of the North of Scotland, where in many places only a few solitary tufts remain to inform posterity that these wastes now so naked and desolate were once covered with herbage." These very ruins have been mistaken by posterity for proofs of olden cultivation by an industrious population, who have been evicted from their ancestral holdings by ruthless progress, by rapacious land grabbers, and by selfish landlords. The sentiment in these cases, it may be seen, has been misapplied.

In such districts—remote, uncivilised—the laborious out-door work was entirely left to the women; which roused indignation in the chivalrous bosom of Mr. Pennant, who declares that "the tender sex amongst the Caithnessians are the only beasts of burden; they turn their patient backs to the dunghill, and receive into the *keises* or baskets as much as their lords and masters think fit to fling in with the pitchfork,

[1] *Farmer's Magazine*, 1804, p. 406.
[2] *Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Dornoch, viii. 6.
[3] *Farmer's Magazine*, p. 408, 1804.

and they trudge to the fields in droves." As they bore their burdens beneath which their backs were bending, they spun the flax on their distaff as they walked. If a crofter lost his horse, he found it more economical to marry—for the wife would do more work than the departed beast. This use of women as beasts of burden was not restricted to these far-off and barbarous regions: in every district where men had no servants or animals, the women were loaded with the hardest labours.[1]

No wonder the women had that haggard, withered, "old look" even while young in years, which startled the traveller into commiseration. These brown, wrinkled, parchment visages were due, however, not entirely to exposure to every weather outside, but partly to peat-smoked life in the filthy hovels, made of parcels of mortarless stones huddled together; or, worse still, in the immemorial bee-huts of the Hebrides, with their green turf roofs, making them hardly distinguishable from the ground—5 or 6 feet high, and 6 feet thick—to which entrance was gained by creeping as into an Eskimo's ice dwelling, by a low tunnel. The people were prolific, but the hardness of their lot kept down the numbers. Significant is Adam Smith's remark on the physical condition of these people: "It is not uncommon, I had frequently been told, in the Highlands for a mother to have borne twenty children and not to have one alive."[2]

We may make a mistake, however, in supposing that these people, so ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-housed, felt as wretched as they looked in their rags, dirt, and squalor. Darwin found that he had quite misplaced his sympathy on the Fuegians; for after pitying them as they stood with uncovered bodies, exposed to the icy blasts, the pelting sleet, and blinding snowstorms of these bleak, inhospitable coasts, he found that they preferred the comforts of their accustomed savage misery to what they considered the misery of new civilised comforts. They had their uncouth pleasures, these crofters, to mitigate their lot; "indolence," which, one who knew them well said, "was the only enjoyment they had," certainly never palled upon them.

[1] Pennant's *Tour; Highlands of Scot. in* 1750 (edit. by Lang), p. 7.
[2] *Wealth of Nations*, bk. i. ch. 8.

They loved loitering in the long winters by their peat fires; they loved the dawdling, intermittent labour in the sunshine of their straths, which were dear to them, and associated with family and clan memories and affections which are keen in the Highland breast.

It has been usual to attribute the want and destitution in the North mainly to the evictions of an industrious peasantry from their beloved ancestral homes, in the interest of heartless owners who sought scope for improvements alike in their properties and their incomes.[1] That there were many cases of harsh treatment—the thrusting of poor folk from their old homes, their old occupations, with little warning and no consideration—was undoubtedly the case. But as a matter of fact, the localities where poverty—hopeless, continual poverty—most prevailed were the very places where fewest changes in the farming system were made; the districts where population diminished or migrated were the very quarters where sheep-walks and extensive farms were longest of being introduced. The greatest destitution was not in the parts of Caithness where sheep had been imported to be grazed on land which in ten years rose to six times its former value. On the contrary, it was in districts where the old ways remained unchanged from time immemorial; it was where the tenants-in-chief or tacksmen had secured their tenure often at a rental of from £30 to £100, and sublet the land to perhaps twenty or thirty crofters, who each paid for a miserable patch of ground from 15s. to 40s. of rent, exacted in the form of grain, provisions, and services, leaving only enough to enable them to subsist in semi-starvation.[2]

[1] In comparing Dr. Webster's estimate of the population in 1755 with Sir John Sinclair's in 1795, it is to be noted that in the Highland counties of Argyll, Ross, and Inverness, where sheep-walks and large farms were introduced (followed by an outcry at depopulation), the number in 1755 was 170,440, and in 1795, 200,226. In the southern counties of Berwick, Wigtown, and Dumfries in 1755, the population was 135,183, which in 1795 had risen to 163,166. On the other hand, in counties like Elgin, Banff, Aberdeen (exclusive of the city), the population had fallen from 172,261 to 163,261, and these were the districts where there was continued the small tenantry and the old fashions of husbandry. —*Farmer's Magazine*, May 1801, p. 139.

[2] MS. of Graham of Gartmore, appendix to Burt's *Letters*, ii. 1815. In some quarters, especially in the Hebrides, "the tacksmen who rented from the

Those best acquainted with the north country asserted there was not work enough for more than half of the population, with earnings amounting to 3s. a week; while the other half were obliged, and greatly preferred, to idle out their days at home—some resorting to thieving and levying blackmail on persons of substance, who paid this tribute to get security from robbery; others sorning on their neighbours, or becoming vagrant beggars through the land. So that the unemployed were divided into the two classes—those who lazily kept their hands in their pockets, and those who put their hands in other people's pockets.[1] When we find that a locality with a rental of £700 had no fewer than 700 women in the population, for half of whom there was no occupation,—when we know that two parishes between 1753 and 1763 were able to furnish, without interference with the labours of their crofts and farms, no less than 400 recruits for the regiments in America, —it becomes obvious that the removal of surplus inhabitants was a blessing, and not the blighting curse which it has been so often represented.[2] There are more complaints of the tyranny and exactions of the tacksmen who turned the people adrift when they were a burden as tenants, than of landlords who evicted them to make way for sheep-walks.[3]

Constantly the crops failed on their crofts; every third or

large landlords large districts are able in general to rank with gentlemen of from £300 to £1000 or upwards a year. They are for the most part relations of the families of whom they hold leases, and many are half-pay officers in the army. There are some of the tacksmen who unite the business of grazing and agriculture with that of trade and oftener of smuggling."—*Travels in West Hebrides from* 1782-1792, by Rev. J. L. Buchanan. "In many parts of the Western Islands and Highlands the earnings are only 3s. a week, which were gained in the Lowlands a hundred years before."—Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, b. i. 8.

[1] It was not owing to evictions or sheep-walks that poverty abounded in Orkney. "Every Saturday, on which day they are privileged to beg, a troop of miserable, ragged creatures are seen going from door to door, almost numerous enough to plunder the whole town."—*Present State of Orkney Islands*, by J. Fea, surgeon, 1775.

[2] *Stat. Acct. Scot.*, Kilmallie, Kilmonivaig; Walker's *Econ. Hist. of Hebrides and Highlands*, i. 84; Smith's *Agric. of Argyllshire*, 1798, p. 240.

[3] Buchanan's *Travels in West Hebrides*, p. 56. Petition of subtenants of a northern county against the tyranny of tacksmen, which begins, "Though your petitioners are not a very respectable, they have just claim to be a useful class of men."—*The Bee*, ii. 300, 1791.

fourth year there was a dearth, or even a famine, among them, and the people were dependent for supplies upon their landlords, or driven to beggary.[1] Speaking of Sutherland in 1772, Pennant writes:[2] "This tract seems the abode of sloth, the people are torpid with idleness and most wretched. Their hovels are most miserable; made of poles, wattled and covered with sods. Till the famine pinches they will not bestir themselves. Dispirited and driven to despair by bad management, crowds are now passing to the eastern coast on report of a ship being there laden with meal. Numbers of them are now emigrating. They wander in a state of desperation; too poor to pay, they sell themselves for their passage, preferring a temporary bondage in a strange land to staying in their native land." It is estimated that during the years between 1760 and 1783 no fewer than 30,000 of the Highlanders emigrated in despair;[3] for year after year they were in utter destitution, and when a famine occurred—as in 1782, when the weather spoilt their scanty grain and the storm prevented their fishing—hundreds were starved to death and cattle died in crowds.[4] Though the tide of emigration was partially stopped during the American war, except to Canada, when peace was restored the crowds swarmed to the ships to cross the Atlantic; for their distress drove them to seek a home in a more hospitable land. Dr. Johnson, as he travelled through the Highlands, was impressed and depressed by its silence and solitude, which was not surprising in a Londoner familiar with the stir and tumult of life in the city that he loved; but he was equally impressed by the indigence and growing depopulation which met his eye.[5] It was inactivity which caused much of this indigence, and in its turn indigence

[1] J. Knox, *British Empire*, i. 9; 1783. Strange to say there is no purely Gaelic word for the operation of begging.

[2] Pennant's *Tour*, ii. 315.

[3] If they could not pay their passage they sold themselves to the captains of the vessels, who at the port resold them to the plantations. This deportation was stopped in 1776, when the war with America broke out, and all intercourse with Great Britain was broken up; and they were forced to remain and starve at home.—J. Knox's *View of British Empire, especially of Scotland*, 3rd ed. 1785, pp. 129, 130.

[4] *Ibid.* 129; Fergusson's *Henry Erskine*, p. 229.

[5] *Journey to Western Islands.*

forced this depopulation. Destitution had been existing for ages, though now intensified by the increase of the inhabitants in these barren districts; and emigration from the picturesque but sterile straths and sea-shores began and continued chiefly because the natives were starved from want of means, or from want of energy to make a livelihood.

In course of time those who went across the Atlantic to colonies in the western continent, where they found a more genial settlement and a more fertile land, sent home news of their prosperity, and kindled an eagerness in their less fortunate kinsmen and clansmen to join them and share in their good fortune beyond the seas.[1] By these means their countrymen were incited to accept the message like to that of Ulysses: "Come, my friends, 'tis not too late to seek a newer world."

[1] Smith's *Agric. of Argyllshire*, p. 333; Knox's *British Empire*, i. 128. "The Highlanders who had served in the American war, being by royal proclamation entitled to settlements in that extensive country, were desirous that their kindred and friends should partake of their good fortune. Some transmitted their sentiments by letter; others, returning to pay a farewell visit to their native land, exhorted their countrymen to exchange their barren heaths for the boundless plains of America."

CHAPTER VII

THE POOR OF SCOTLAND

I

In 1698 Mr. Andrew Fletcher was seated in his mansion at Salton, in his richly-stored library, inditing a *Second Discourse on the Affairs of Scotland.* A short, thin, sallow-faced, pock-pitted man, with fiery eyes and stern looks, frowning under his brown wig—such was the outward appearance of the honest patriot and stubborn republican, who disagreed with most people and things, was always most decidedly of his own opinion, who hated all monarchies, disliked kings, be they Jacobite or Orange, and despised parties, whether Whig or Tory. But he certainly loved his own country of Scotland, deplored its poverty, and wrote in his vigorous way suggestions for its redemption. He was writing during the seven lean years of terrible dearth, and he saw wretchedness everywhere around him and people famishing at his very door. "There are," he wrote,[1] "at this day two hundred thousand people begging from door to door. And though the number of them be perhaps double to what it was formerly, by reason of this present great distress, yet in all times there have been about one hundred thousand of these vagabonds, who have lived without any regard or subjection either to the laws of the land, or even those of God and nature." For this vagabondism he grimly prescribed the remedy of forced labour, or serfdom, of which he had an example near him in the salteries at Prestonpans, where the salters were bondsmen for life; and for which he

[1] *Political Works*, 1749, p. 100.

found a sanction in statutes of his country, authorising the seizing of vagrants as "perpetual servants." But before accepting his striking figures as strictly accurate, one would like to learn how he knew that there were a hundred thousand of these hereditary nomadic crews—savage, wild, and dangerous; for they had their haunts in remote parts of the country, in caves by sea-shore and in mountain tracts, and, as he says, "no magistrate could ever be informed which way one of a hundred of these wretches died;" no census had been taken, no enumeration was possible. He further states that of these two hundred thousand beggars swarming in the land half had sprung up "by reason of the present great distress." One again asks, On what data had he formed this calculation? As at the time he wrote there were still three more grievous years of dearth and starvation to run, at this rate of increase the beggars must have accumulated in 1701 to an hundred thousand more, which would result in the startling numbers of three hundred thousand mendicants in a population of little over a million—or every fourth person a beggar or vagabond, to be supported by the other three—child, man, or woman.[1] As a rule round numbers seldom square with facts. Without adopting Fletcher's numbers as correct, we may at least accept his vivid picture of the time in which he lived as accurate—one of wide-spread misery, of abject need or famine.

The worst fact connected with the social condition of the country was the amount of hereditary vagabondism, the existence of a large, widely-scattered, predatory class, who, in the earlier part of the century, as in centuries bygone, infested the outlying districts of the Lowlands and Highlands. Out of these glens and valleys, from caves and coverts, by rocky shores, from Caithness to the Solway, they came to prowl, to beg, to menace, to extort, and to plunder from the rural people. At every festival and fair—at wedding, and funeral, and communion Monday, when alms were given from the kirk door—these "randie beggars," with their wild looks, their filth, and their masterfulness, proved the pest of the community and the terror

[1] In his *First Discourse* he estimates the population of Scotland at one million and a half—numbers which were not attained for a century later. The population really was about 1,100,000 when he wrote.

of the quiet, parochial beggars waiting for the doles that the tinkers seized. Through two hundred years the Scots Parliament had been uttering proclamations, and fulminations, and penalties against the hordes of "sturdy beggars, Egyptians, sorners, cairds, tinkers, gypsies, thiggers," as they are called in copious and indiscriminate vocabulary, whom Fletcher describes as "living without regard to laws of man, or God, or nature, like wild beasts." But all in vain. The statutes were severe enough, and when a rare opportunity happened in policeless, jailless districts they were carried out with vigour. Vagabonds were burnt in the ear with an iron and banished the district—the magistrates being quite satisfied they had performed their duty if they rid their locality of a nuisance and sent it on to their neighbour—under pain of being hanged if they returned. The more inveterate Egyptians and sorners (a "sorner" being one who extorts food or help by terror or threats of force) were banished "furth of Scotland," and if they were caught in act of theft they were regarded as reputed or "notorious thieves," and forthwith hanged. In these ways the ranks were dispersed rather than reduced. In the Lowlands the hordes of sorners were dreaded in lonely farms and moorland cottages, where they pilfered the fowls and sometimes kidnapped the children, and robbed in the highway. It was into their hands that the eminent grammarian, Thomas Ruddiman,[1] fell when trudging as a lad to Aberdeen University, and the poor student was despoiled of the little savings for his "up-keep" in the college and the hard wrought-for clothes on his back. It was they who kidnapped Adam Smith[2] when he was a child, and nearly deprived the country of a brilliant citizen and the world of its most original political economist. In the North and Highlands these bands tried more venturesome games, appearing at markets and fairs in bodies of twelve men, who, armed with dirks and muskets, watched the people as they made their purchases or their bargains, and plundered them on the lonely paths homewards.[3] To these gangs had belonged James Macpherson, leader of a band in the towns of Morayshire and Banff, who, with

[1] Chalmers' *Life of Ruddiman*, p. 6.
[2] Rae's *Life of Adam Smith*, p. 5.
[3] Forbes' *Institutes*, p. 79; Hume's *Commentaries*, 1798, i. 470.

comrades, was hanged in 1700, according to dubious tradition and song, playing on his fiddle on his way to the gallows the tune he had composed in prison.[1]

As the century advanced and the law reached the Highlands, as quieter and better ordered times set in, the rude, wild races dwindled down to the shabby groups of tinkers who still linger in the country, inheritors through centuries of ancestral, vagrant qualities, descendants of the most ancient families of Scotland—of the vagabond tribes.

There was a characteristic touch of Scots kindliness and sympathy with poverty in the law of the time, exempting from the category of thief, with its consequent penalty, a man who, being in utmost necessity and with no other means to supply it, took meat from another. No man could be charged with theft for as much meat as he could carry on his back.[2] Poverty in any form appealed to the heart both of the Scots Parliament and the Scottish people.

When the century began special causes had temporarily increased the ranks of mendicancy throughout Scotland to an alarming extent. The seven years had passed of calamitous seasons—when the crops did not ripen, the harvests were not gathered, and the people were reduced to terrible extremities to get food. People perished in hundreds,—"thousands dying at this day" is Fletcher's strong expression—and cattle all over the country were destroyed by cold, and hunger, and disease; farms were deserted by farmers who were ruined; large portions of the agricultural classes were forced into mendicancy, and the land was swarming with beggars—farmers, labourers, artisans, now reduced to live on charity, who once had been able and willing to bestow it. Poverty "by visitation of providence"—such as agricultural distress in the seven "hungry years" and the dearth of 1709—made mendicancy respectable among the pious; and too often the vagrant life,

[1] When no one of the crowd would accept from him the fiddle when he had finished, he broke it over his knee. Burns' ode gives him an immortality he does not deserve—

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dantonly gaed he,
He played, and sprang, and danced it round
Beneath the gallows' tree.

[2] Forbes' *Institutes of Scots Law*, 1737, p. 148.

begun from misfortune in those days of destitution, was continued by acquired taste and confirmed habit. For a long time after, folk pretending to have suffered from the "ill years" throve on popular sympathy, and at last became the pest of tenants, the despair of justices, and the burden of Kirk-Sessions. For at least twenty years of the century the amount of comparatively respectable and necessitous vagrancy remained abnormal; but in course of time the terrible condition of the poor, deplored by Fletcher, became a thing of the past, diminishing as the prosperity of the country increased.

As we trace the history of the Scots poor throughout the century, we shall find that with frugal habits and simple ways the able-bodied could live on means which the poorest English would have despised, and that the needs of the aged and infirm were sufficiently supplied by the voluntary charity of the people; while the pride and independence of the peasantry made them look after their own kith and kin as long as they were able to prevent the indignity of their descending to pauperism. Owing to these reasons, the relief of the poor was never an anxiety to the people nor a felt burden on the country.

Very much otherwise was it in England. Although that part of the kingdom was as prosperous as the northern part was depressed, at the beginning of the century the number of paupers was enormous. Out of a population of 5,500,000 every fifth man and woman was dependent more or less on compulsory parochial support,[1] on which one million pounds annually were expended. English poor laws had done everything to foster habitual poverty; the system of giving aid to able-bodied persons had virtually put a premium on wastefulness, idleness, recklessness, and fraud, and had fatally undermined self-respect and independence in the poor—where more than half of those in receipt of parish rates were capable of earning their own living.[2] The statute of 1662—which, with one or two ineffectual modifications, was to remain in force for nearly two hundred years—prohibited every one leaving his native parish unless he was able to occupy a £10 tenancy. The

[1] Pashley's *Poor and Poor Laws*, p. 237.

[2] Eden's *State of the Poor*, i. 216; Sir G. Nicholl's *Poor and Poor Laws of England*, i. 370.

consequence was that the poor, however industrious, were confined to their own over-populated and stagnant district, and though able to get occupation and good wages a few miles off, were consigned to perpetual poverty in some tradeless village. Meanwhile, in order to prevent any increase of burdens on the land from paupers, landlords destroyed cottages and dismantled hamlets on their estates that they "might not become nests of beggars' brats.[1] The result was that the poor were driven from their homes when ill-fortune overtook them; labourers were forced to herd together in villages and towns, in squalid, filthy, overcrowded dens, ruinous to health, to energy, to decency, and morals.[2] When the eighteenth century began, the alarming increase in the rates (which had doubled in twenty years) was a source of grave fears; and perplexed speeches from the throne, impossible schemes of bewildered statesmen, and crude plans of self-confident pamphleteers, testify at once to the extent of growing evils and the hopelessness of any remedy being found for them.

When we turn to Scotland we find that to meet the problem of poverty there was no anxiety, far less despair. And yet wages were half what were earned in England;[3] the soil was barren; wretched agriculture was wasting the land and starving the people; trade was almost non-existent; there was chronic scarcity of money amongst the higher classes, and constant scarcity, and often dearth of food or "vivers," among the peasantry.

II

The manner in which the poor in Scotland were supported and relieved was simple and primitive, and brings out vividly many quaint and homely traits of old Scots life. It was necessary, in order to save too many incursions on parochial kindliness, that some restriction should be put on those who were entitled to appeal to the charity of the people in any

[1] Arthur Young's *Farmer's Letter to the People of England*, 1768, p. 288.

[2] Eden's *State of Poor*, i. 361.

[3] The labourers there had from 1s. to 8d. a day.—Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, bk. i. chap. 7.

locality, and to exclude vagrants and those who were unknown in character, and might be unworthy of help. The method had been prescribed by a law dating as far back as James VI. A license was given to a certain number of beggars yearly to ply throughout each parish. They required to wear for their identification little stamps of lead, bearing the name of the parish, supplied by the Kirk-Session, and worn on their gowns. These "blue gowns," as they were called, or "gaberlunzies"—from the wallet they carried—were not allowed to beg beyond their own parish, lest they poach on others' preserves. If the parish or town was large they were divided into different bands,[1] so that they in turn might traverse each division in one day, and the whole parish in the course of a fortnight.[2] In this way there was one continuous stream of mendicancy passing through the neighbourhood; knocking at the door, not only of the laird, but also of the farmer and labourer, presenting their "meal-pokes," which beggars never took away empty, for none refused to put into the wallet a handful of oat or barley meal. Not only elderly and infirm persons were licensed, but sometimes children even were granted badges giving them the privilege and right of begging.[3] The restriction was made that only persons who had resided three years in the bounds were to have this qualification; and all others, as well as beggars from other districts, were without fail brought before the Kirk-Session and duly "advised"[4] (that is commanded) to betake themselves to their own place—the constable, in the rare case of there being such an official, being rewarded with 2s. 6d. Scots (or 2½d. sterling) for every one whom he lodged in jail. This system, objectionable as it was, at least had the advantage of lightening the meagre church collections of much of the burden which they would otherwise have borne, and of leaving all the more to be dispensed to the old, the sick, and the "bedrids" of the parish.

Besides the professional blue-gowns or gaberlunzies, and the

[1] Warden's *Angus or Forfarshire*, iii. 402.

[2] In 1845, badges were given to paupers entitling them to beg in Brechin. Poor Law Commissioners report in 1842: "In most of the burghs and smaller towns the paupers are allowed to beg on one or more days of the week."—Nicholl's *Hist. Scot. Poor Laws*, p. 142.

[3] Campbell's *Balmerino*, p. 240.

[4] Edgar, ii. 10.

casual poor who sought aid, there were beggars who, being maimed or deformed, were familiarly known as "objects"; and in these poor, ill-fed days the number of imbeciles, diseased and deformed, was very great. These seem to have lived fairly well on the sympathies of the people, and the mode in which they made their progress through the country is characteristic of a combined kindliness and caution. They were conveyed in barrows, or "hurdles,"[1] and it was the custom for the villagers or farmer at whose door the "object" —often an impostor—was set down, to supply the needed food and lodging, and next morning to carry the hurdle with its occupant to the next house, and there deposit it. In this luxurious manner the decrepit beggar lived and travelled in ease. The conveyance was certain of being obtained, for the farmer was only too anxious to rid himself of the nuisance, and to place it with as little delay as possible at his neighbour's door.

One cause which increased and recruited the ranks of unprivileged vagrants was the practice of each town banishing its "bad characters," convicted of any crime or suspected of ill living, "beyond the liberties of the city." By these self-preserving measures town authorities drove to other districts the refuse of their own population, who began forthwith to prowl over the country, getting what supplies they could in spite of all efforts of effete constables to suppress them, and of all penalties to punish them.

To counteract this evil, strenuous measures were taken by parish Kirk-Sessions that no unnecessary burden should fall upon its scanty funds; and indefatigable vigilance was exerted that no one of ill-repute should become dependent

[1] Kirk-Session records contain such entries as these: 1724.—"To a distressed person carryed in a cart from place to place, 14s." "To a cripple carryed in barrow, 3s." "To making wheel for a barrow, 14s. Scots."—Cramond's *Church of Rathven*. Up to the end of the century in towns old vagabonds, either cripple or pretending to be so, got charity and conveyance in this way, expecting help and removal from the persons at whose door they were laid. "My father," says a writer, giving his reminiscences, "gave orders to the servants to let them and their barrows lie at the doors till relieved by their own means." Servants had great pleasure in laying the cripples at the door of any one whom they wished specially to annoy.—*Glasgow Past and Present* ii. 94; Agnew's *Hereditary Sheriffs*, p. 588.

upon them for relief who had migrated from other quarters. Old Acts of the General Assembly had supported this anxious aim; and since 1694 there had been in force the regulation that "care be taken in receiving servants that they have testimonials of their honesty and Christian behaviour, and that the same be required of all others who flit or remove from one parish to another." In this way fugitives from the secular law or from Church discipline were frustrated in their efforts to escape to the quiet obscurity and security of the country, and were forced to drift into towns, where they might be less noticed, although even there the populations were so small, and the elders in their several districts so vigilant, that a strange face was soon detected in the streets. If a fugitive, in his simplicity, sought a refuge from the eye of elders, creditors, or magistrates by retiring to a rural district where he was unknown, he quickly discovered that the very fact of his being "unknown" was the most notorious fact about him; and there was a certainty, whenever the rumour of his presence arose, that the elders and minister would meet upon his case, and an entry would appear in the records as follows: "This day delated A. B., a stranger come into the parish without a testimonial; orders that he be summoned to next Session that he may give account of himself."[1]

The professional beggars, licensed or not licensed, were ever on the alert for any distribution of alms—they swarmed at marriages, and they swarmed at funerals. At these latter occasions, after the guests had partaken of the ale, and short-bread, and oat-cakes before the "lifting,"[2] the poor partook of the food which was provided for them; and such items mentioned in the old household accounts as "12 dozen bread for the poor" on the occasion of a burial, show that their share in post-mortem charity was very considerable. It may be easily imagined how eagerly the vagrants and poor

[1] "Old Church Life," *Scots. Mag.* 1686. In 1698, Kirk-Session of Tillicoultry "being informed that a man had come to the parish without a certificate, instruct their officer to cause him to procure written evidence of his respectability, under pain of his being proceeded against before the civil magistrate in order to his being removed."—Rogers, iii. 400.

[2] Grossart's *Parish of Shotts*, p. 206.

listened in olden days when the bellman passed through the village, proclaiming, after a premonitory tinkle of his "dead-bell": "All brothers and sisters, I let you to wot that there is a brother departed out of this present world according to the will of Almighty God," and announcing the name and address of the corpse, invited everyone to be present at the interment.[1]

A "communion season" in a parish attracted crowds from all quarters, for it was well known that on the Monday after the sacrament the elders would distribute to the poor the collections from the huge gatherings of worshippers made during the preceding days of preaching. There accordingly assembled a motley and unruly ragged lot, who sat on grave-stones, or stood amongst the long grass and nettles of the kirkyard till the service was over, to share in the division of bodles or turners. Sometimes the noisy mob was so riotous and violent that the Sessions had to refuse doles to any but their own people; although on these pious occasions the parochial purse was less close and more generous than usual to the needy.[2]

Exacting and importunate as the beggars certainly were, the alms expected by them were not exorbitant, as judged by the monetary standard of our day. At the beginning of the century, when, previous to the Union, turners or bodles were current Scots money, the mendicant would only ask a modest bodle[3] (equal to the sixth part of a penny). So customary was this tribute, that in the streets of Edinburgh might often have been witnessed a richly dressed and periwigged and be-sworded gentleman going through a careful, curious, and elaborate pecuniary transaction with some squalid, dirty creature. This operation consisted in the gentleman, who may not have had in his waistcoat pocket the smallest possible current coin,[4] giving

[1] Morer's *Short Acct.* 1702.

[2] After communion: "1700, March 28.—Given in turners (=bodles) at the kirk door, 3s."—Cramond's *Cullen*, p. 139. 1710.—"To randie beggars, 7s. in dyotts."

[3] Burt's *Letters*, i. 145. "The beggar managed to be better off than the working man, and went well shod, while the industrious trudged barefoot."

[4] Scots money was one-twelfth part of the same denomination in sterling money: Dyot, or Scots penny = $\frac{1}{12}$th of a penny; bodle, or two pennies = $\frac{1}{6}$th; plack, groat, or farthing = $\frac{1}{4}$th; bawbee = $\frac{1}{2}$d.; shilling = 1d.; merk, or 13s. 4d. = 1s. 1d.; pound = 1s. 8d. A bodle was a coin named after Bothwell, a coiner,

a beggar a bawbee, and waiting patiently while there was extracted from the malodorous rags the change of one plack or two bodles, which brought the donation to the recognised conventional sum.

The regular means of meeting the necessities of the poor were the collections at church from Sunday to Sunday. It might be supposed that a people so church-going as the Scots in the first half of the eighteenth century—with their frequent ordinances and prolonged communion seasons—would produce large contributions to the poor-boxes. But the amounts gathered were extremely small, and the individual offerings were strikingly diminutive. This was due, however, not to the meanness and niggardliness of the people, but to their own great poverty. A parish with a sermon-seeking population of a thousand—without a dissenter in its bounds—considered that it deserved well of its country and of Providence if its Sabbath collections came to 1s. 6d. to 2s. a week, and a communion "occasion," attended on four days by worshippers from all quarters up to the number of 1500 or 2000, might result in collections of the value of only 5s. or 6s. sterling. On ordinary Sundays in smaller parishes the offerings, which were to support all the paupers and relieve all cases of distress, might not be more than 6d. or 1s. each week. It is evident, therefore, that it was a matter of grave concern that as many worshippers as possible should assemble from Sunday to Sunday, and probably it was not only one thoughtful Session, like that in Bute, which fined 6d. Scots everyone who went to another parish church, because "the poor wants their charity at the kirk."[1]

But miserable as were the church collections in quantity, they were still worse in quality; for a large proportion of the coins deposited in the "basins" at the kirkyard gate, or in

as there were "Aitchisons" named after a coiner of that name.—Ruddiman's *Introduction to Diplomata.* Scots coins bore names of French origin: bawbee, from *bas billon*, or base bullion; "turner," from Tournois; "plack," from *plaque;* groat, from *gros.*—Robertson's *Scottish Coinage.* The mode of reckoning in Scots money was gradually abandoned after 1760. In Auchinleck, Ayrshire, in 1753 (Paterson's *Ayrshire and Wigtonshire*, i. 184). In Balmerino, 1775 (Campbell's *Balmerino*, p. 243).

[1] Kingarth; Hewison's *Bute in Olden Time*, ii. 275.

the ladles in the kirk, consisted of bad copper money, obsolete or foreign coins, which were only worth their weight in metal. At the time of the Union the Scots silver money had been called in to be reminted to standard English coins; but the copper money was left, and lay vexatiously in the hands of the people as it went out of legal currency—becoming thinner, smaller, as it wore out.[1] The consequence was that they palmed off in church what would not pass in the market. As the native money was scarce, the trade with Holland brought into the hands of traders and merchants a good deal of Dutch money; and from the Dutch busses or boats, which were busy fishing off the Scots coast, their mean copper coins were brought by the foreign sailors making their purchases on shore. These got a furtive circulation in the community, although they were worthless in business. Most insignificant of all was the doit—only equal to a Scots penny, or the twelfth part of an English penny. Accordingly, in the parish poor-box, during the course of a year, met a strange fraternity of coins of all ages, peoples, and tongues—most of them shapeless, illegible, diminutive—from doits to turners, from placks to bawbees, from "Irish harps" to "English clipped money"; while lying among their poor neighbours might be found a Spanish rix dollar, or Flemish guilder. Kirk-Session records of these days teem with bitter lamentations over the poverty-stricken sin.[2] The money accumulating through the year was received in a capacious box, which in some parishes was placed at the church door instead of a plate. There were two slits—one narrow, for silver; the other wider, for copper. There were two different locks with separate keys in possession of two elders, so that one could not open it without the presence and help of the other "box master," as he was called. Once or twice a

[1] Kirk-Session of "Whitekirk," Aug. 18, 1730. The minister and elders did receive from the kirk treasurer the poor's-box, and the poor's money therein was counted, and there was in the box of good current money at the present rates ane 100 and 10 pounds of Whit money. In turners there was of current coins 5 lbs. 10s. 10d.; in Scots half merks, 12 lbs.; in doyts and ill copper, 2 lbs. 13s. 2d.—Ritchie's *Churches of St. Baldred.*

[2] The Church, however, was not the only sufferer from base coin. Stirling Town Council in 1722 "discharges persons from giving Dutch doitts or letter bodles which are not current coin to the prejudice of commerce, under the highest penalty."—*Burgh Records*, p. 174.

year the elders met for the opening of the chest. This was a grave occasion. It was an anxious moment—the lifting of the lid over the heterogeneous assortment of parochial charity. Not unnaturally, after the lid was raised some bitterness was excited. Many Kirk-Session records reveal that emotion. Thus, in Carluke,[1] 1739, it is recorded: "Sold the sum of £33 : 5 sh. in bad halfpennies, and for £13 : 15 sh., *inde* loss to the poor, £19 : 13 : 00." Next year it is stated: "Sold 8 lbs. of bad copper for 3 pounds 13 sh. Scots, *inde* loss to the Session £4 : 2 : 00." Year by year through all parts of Scotland similar complaints[2] were uttered; while fishing villages and trading towns cost the Sessions most vexation, owing to the base assortment of barterless foreign money—or, as they were termed "furren curreners"—which came into the hands of the people and quickly afterwards passed into the hands of the elders. The Session knew that every doit was a mockery to the poor, and every bodle or "lettered turner" was a scandal to charity.[3] A statistically minded parochial historian, in noting the fact that during the ten years' incumbency of a session clerk at Cambuslang there was no less than £84 : 2 : 8 Scots of these worthless pieces of metal laid in the plates or ladles, makes the unpleasant estimate that, if each contribution was one penny Scots in the form of a doit, there must have been 20,190 acts of meanness and hypocrisy perpetrated; and allowing that a third of the population of 1300 went to kirk, it is concluded that each Sunday every eleventh worshipper deliberately deceived the elders and cheated the poor—an interesting but discomforting calculation.[4] These unworthy offerings (which were least worthy when given at communions, as the sick and distressed and indigent were helped from these collections at

[1] *Notes of Parish of Carluke*, p. 11.

[2] In Mauchline, in 1740, the "Session found in the box of good money £66 : 17 : 6 Scots, and of bad copper £33 : 19 : 7." — Edgar's *Church Life.* Waddell's *Old Church Chronicle*, p. 169: Besides "furren curreners" the Session complains of "lettered bodles" and "English clypt money."

[3] Mauchline Session in 1691 registers in July 27, the communion day: "Received in doits this day 3s. sterling," which means that on the sacramental occasion 1725 worshippers attending the preachings contributed in foreign money equal to the twelfth part of one English penny each.—Edgar's *Church Life.*

[4] *Notes on Parish of Carluke*, p. 12.

the church door on the sacramental Monday) were condemned by ecclesiastical courts; but rebukes and threats of ministers were disregarded. In vain did Kirk-Sessions "desire their minister to exhort the people not to mock God by casting into the offering dyots and other money that is not current."[1] In vain did the Synod of Aberdeen in 1755 appoint its moderator "to talk with the officers of custom to do what they could to prevent the importation of base coin."[2] Yet all these charges sink into insignificance before the accusation, that country people in Aberdeenshire were in the practice of putting into the plate bad halfpence and of taking out good ones.[3] The church collections were invaluable receptacles for useless coin; and it is significant that after the poor-box at Old Machar had been broken into and the contents stolen, the burglar boy was at once detected by the simple fact that in playing cards with his comrades he had nothing to stake save bodles, doyts, and bad halfpennies. These could have come from no shop, for merchants were too cautious to take them; the conclusion was inevitable that they came from the poor-box, where alone people had the conscience and courage to put them.

As in some churches there were two bad coins for every three good ones, the serious problem yearly arose in every parish, how to dispose of them? Owing to the glut in the market, the elders who were appointed to sell their ill money "went to the various smiths to see what they can get."[4] But it was difficult to get satisfactory terms. It is true that occasionally the price of "base copper" rose considerably, and the guileless elders rejoiced greatly at selling the nefarious wares so highly. Shrewd suspicions, however, were quickly awakened that the sudden appreciation of copper was due to the popular demand for more cheap coins to put once more in the "basins" on Sabbath. In this way the base copper, the "furren curreners," clipped English money, and what not, which had been sold so satisfactorily by the Session one week, were retailed to

[1] In 1704, *Annals of Hawick*, by R. Wilson.

[2] So also Synod of Moray; Cramond's *Presbytery of Fordyce*.

[3] *Black Calendar of Aberdeen*, p. 24.

[4] 1734.—"Part of the money being impassible, the elders think fit to lay it up till such time as it may pass."—*Parish of Maryton or Old Montrose*, by Fraser, p. 230.

church-going customers, who replaced them frugally next week in the plates and ladles.

When all efforts to sell these eleemosynary frauds in villages and towns near had lamentably failed, the ministers proceeding to the General Assembly sometimes had a quantity put into their saddle bags or wallets in order to sell them to the shops of Edinburgh.[1] And should it happen that a parishioner was going over to Holland in a bark, who had no objections to take a bundle of Dutch dyots back to their native country, a store was made up and added to his baggage, with directions to buy with the money goods which might be serviceable for the poor.[2] Careful Sessions at other times utilised their worthless coins to buy a dead-bell to announce funerals, or jougs to hold delinquents; but there is a finer irony in the expedient which sent the base copper "to be melted down to make cups for collecting the poor-money at the sacrament."[3] Yet another vexation met the Kirk-Sessions in some districts of Scotland, and that was the appearance in the box of Irish coins and trade tokens, which were also valueless. It was at the period when turners had become rarer and dyots fewer that the plates were infested with these objectionable pieces of coin which the session clerks note contemptuously as "harps" and "Hibernias."[4] As old Scots money wore out in time, and from its curious rarity found its way rather into numismatic collections of the rich than into the church collections for the poor, "base money" could not be so easily procured for use on the Lord's Day and communions, and by this inconvenient scarcity the parishioners were reduced to honesty. It was fortunate that agricultural prosperity had so far raised the scale of wages in the country, and trade had so far increased earnings in towns, that the people were able to afford their halfpenny where formerly they had been too poor to give a plack.

There were, fortunately, other sources from which Kirk-

[1] 1739.—"Sold of bad copper £35:10 for £5:13:00." "9 lbs. of base copper for 4 shillings."—*Church of Fordyce*, p. 59.

[2] *Record Book of Glamis: Introd.*, Scot. Hist. Society.

[3] *Church of Cruden*, p. 146.

[4] 1739.—"Sold 9 lbs. 4 oz. of Hibernias and harps."—*Church of Fordyce*, p. 81.

Sessions derived funds wherewith to relieve distress and support the needy and aged—sources certainly of the most incongruous and miscellaneous sorts. One of these consisted of what are variously termed "pledges," "pawns," or "consigned money." These were sums of money left with Sessions by persons intending to get married. If the marriage promise was broken the person to blame forfeited his or her pledge for the behoof of the poor; but if the marriage came off the pledge was returned to the depositors. Accordingly, we find such entries in old records as this in 1725:[1] "John Wright will not stand to his matrimonial promise; his pledge is forfeited, being a crown, to the poor. The woman, willing to abide by her promise, has the crown she has laid down returned." But it not unfrequently occurred in those indigent days that the persons were so penniless that they had no money whatever to deposit; in that case they required to leave in custody some article which was (at least to them) of value. For example, in 1725: "John Shepheard's pledge, consisting of a sword, is confiscated on non-performance of his intended marriage. It is estimate at 36s. Scots, and to be sold to any who will buy it." At other times there were left as securities for good behaviour such pieces of property as a "white plaid," a chair, a ring, a workman's tool, a few spoons, and little articles of rustic jewellery. Persons were also forced by the stern Sessions, the rigid censors of morals, to come under other engagements connected with their wedding, and to leave pledges for their fulfilment. They were made to promise that they should have no festivities or penny bridals, with their "promiscuous dancing," which were then sources of scandal and objects of condemnation. It was a common order that "whosoever shall have pypers at their wedding shall forfeit pawns, and that they shall not meet in a change-house after their wedding under the same pain."[2] By the frequent forfeiture of these pledges—the pleasure of the bridal far outweighing the pain of losing the pawn—no small addition was made to the revenue of each parish.

In other ways private vices proved public benefits. The

[1] Cramond's *Church of Cruden*, p. 145.

[2] Edgar, ii. 37; *Church of Cruden*, p. 139.

fines imposed on members of the congregation for any fault or misdemeanour—above all for immorality—greatly supplemented the parochial funds.[1] These penalties varied according to the frequency or the heinousness of the sin, and also according to the social standing of the offenders, whose scandal should be further expiated by appearing on the stool of repentance and being rebuked from the pulpit. To escape this latter shame and ordeal the higher classes commuted their penance into a sum of money to the Session, and the laird was often absolved in private while the servant was condemned in public. As the century advanced, and decency and common sense opposed the open form of penance, the practice of exacting money fines became more usual, and the funds of parishes were so much enlarged that a third or a half of its supplies was derived from punishment of transgressors of morality.

In early days there were no fixed seats in parish churches, and each worshipper required to bring his stool, or "creepie," each Sunday with him, or to leave it in the kirk, if he did not wish to stand during the prolonged service. There grew up, therefore, the practice of letting out seats for hire or selling "stances" whereon to place them, and the proceeds were devoted to the support of the poor.[2] In the early part of the century it was only by express permission of the elders and minister that a seat, or "desk," could be affixed, and even when any one erected a seat at his own expense a fixed sum or an annual rent was exacted.[3] If any one left the parish he was entitled to take away the seat that he had "set up" for himself. In other cases the Sessions put in seats and

[1] Penalties in Banffshire: £4 for first offence, £8 the second; adultery, from £20 to £40 Scots (in 1813 they were from 20s. to 30s. sterling). Penalties in Fordyce between 1701-1714 = £999 Scots. No fines in Presbytery of Fordyce after 1839.—Cramond's *Illegitimacy in Banffshire.*

[2] 1708.—"The Session appoints that every pew shall pay to Session half a crown for the use of the poor, and the same be payd before the seats be set up in the kirk."—Davidson's *Inverurie*, p. 144. Lintrathen, Blairgowrie, *Stat. Acct. Scot.; Parish of Cruden*, p. 142.

[3] "1721.—Put into the box for Mr. Stephen, the Session having granted liberty to put up a pew in church, £1, 10s."—Kirriemuir, Jervoise's *Angus and Mearns*, i. 201. In the previous century the Session is enjoined to build a "desk" for the minister of Monymusk, but the minister was himself required to pay rent for it.—Davidson's *Inverurie*, p. 348.

forms out of the funds of the church, having come to this resolution: "Whereas there is now a great deal of confusion and disorder in the body of the kirk by chairs and seats, and the people be not well accommodate"—in such a case it was but fair that they should extract rent for behoof of the poor, whose collections they had used to seat the church.

There were other sources from which came accessions to parish revenues in intermittent streams, some of which dried up owing to changes of fashion in society. In the early part of the century the practice had originated amongst the Episcopalians of having private baptism and private marriage—a practice which, indeed, was forced upon them, seeing that the sect was (up till 1712) virtually prohibited from having chapels of their own. In a short time the ministers of the Church found to their intense annoyance that it was becoming fashionable among the richer members of their own congregations, and finding that it was both impossible and impolitic to resist the mode too resolutely they exacted fines.[1] These moneys went, of course, to increase the parochial funds. Funerals also brought in their supplies to relieve local poverty. There were the "bell pennies"—equal to 12 pennies Scots—for tolling or tinkling the "dead-bell" before the coffin at funerals; there was allowance for the use of "dead-shifts" for the poor, and the letting out of mortcloths to cover the body if there was no "kist," and to cover the coffin if there was one, at the rate of one merk. This last was a monopoly of the Session, and if any adventurous tradesman dared to offer a mortcloth at a cheaper rate he was at once pounced upon,[2] and if the offenders

[1] Drymen, Aug. 1696.—Kirk-Session ordains that "quhoever sends for the minister to marry or baptise out of the church shall pay for each marriage 20 shillings (Scots), and for each baptism 10 shillings *toties quoties*."—G. Smith's *Strathendrick*, p. 84. There was good reason in the case of substitution of private for public marriage to exact penalties to help the poor, because on occasion of weddings in kirk it was not unusual to have collections for parish funds. In Dunblane:

1693,	marriage collections,	£2	5
1694,	,,	4	12
	,,	0	9
	,,	0	14

Scottish Antiquary, v. 180.

[2] Greenshield's *Lesmahagow*, p. 139; *Elgin Records*, p. 186.

refused to submit to the Church the heritors were directed to refuse a grave to be dug except by those who would employ the parish cloth, which had long ago changed its original Genoa black for brown and rusty dinginess.

All these rivulets to the current of charity were substantially increased in some fortunate places by a more secure and permanent source; namely, by bequests or "mortifications" left by the dying for the benefit of the needy of their native parish. These sums to modern eyes appear strangely meagre, although in those frugal days they were regarded as even munificent. In commemoration of the gift, and to encourage the others, a black board with white or gilt letters recorded on the church walls how "A. B., residenter, left a mortification of £100 Scots for the poor of this parish"; and to the gaze of successive generations of grateful worshippers (who afterwards mistook invariably the humble £100 Scots (£8) for the substantial £100 sterling) this benefaction was fatiguingly presented; and, unfortunately, the keeping of this memorial in thorough repair in time probably cost the parish more than the original donation was worth.

One more parochial source of emolument deserves to be mentioned, as it affords a glimpse into a curious phase of old Scottish rural life. The Kirk-Session was not merely the almoner of the people—it was also their pawnbroker and their money-lender. In days before the middle of the century, when agriculture was at its lowest stage, farmers—contending with bad soil, bad crops, and bad seasons—were in sore straits for means to tide over ill times. As county banks were not yet established, and there was no security to offer them if they had been, tenants had recourse in their troubles to the funds lying in the Kirk-Session's hands, and from these they were lent small sums to help them out of their difficulties at moderate interest, giving bonds which were probably as good—but no better—than their word.[1] When the poor-box underwent its annual review there therefore appeared a motley assemblage of contents; besides good and bad copper there were bills and acceptances of all kinds. In one parish in 1727 the elders, after ransacking the box, record that "there were in the poor-

[1] Grossart's *Parish of Shotts;* Parton, *Stat. Acct. Scot.* ii. 187.

box two bills and three bonds amounting to £84 Scots, and in money, black and white, £71." Next year, "there is a bond of 200 merks, bills for 115 merks, a bill for 39 pounds, another for 15 pounds. In ready money 142 pounds, also a box of doyts and bad money 47 pounds, which exchanged for 24 pounds." Not always were these money-lending transactions successful or safe, and the misplaced confidence of friendly elders in their poorer neighbours, and perhaps relatives, occasionally sadly impaired the finances of the parish. In their anxiety to get funds there was no expedient to which they hesitated to resort in some parishes—whether to keep milch cows for loan, or to let out the communion tables to form stalls for huxters at a fair.[1]

III

In the first half of the century paupers were allowed 1s. 6d. to 2s. a month—an allowance which rose to 3s. in the latter part of the century; and usually this aid they were permitted to supplement by begging from door to door. In parishes having a population of about 2000 the whole annual funds at the disposal of the Session would amount to £12 or £13 sterling.[2] Smaller parishes, again, where weekly collections did not exceed 6d. or 1s., were able, with the help of fees for the use of a mortcloth, "so ragged that nobody will use it," to support their pensioners even at the end of the century.

The casual doles which fell from the hands of the Session went to meet the most extraordinary variety of claims from the parishioners of olden days, as specified in the venerable records with quaint phrasing and unhumorous minuteness: "To a woman who has had nine children at three births is given 6d."; [3] "to a Paisley bodie called Finlay, 4d."; to a man "to help to pay his coffin, £2, 8s." There came for aid

[1] *Parish of Carluke*, p. 266. "July 1718.—It is appointed that none of the communion tables be lent out at fairs."—Paterson's *Hist. of Ayrshire*, ii. 128.

[2] Hawick in 1727 had £14 of yearly funds.—*Annals of Hawick*, Edgar, ii. 59. *Stat. Acct.*, Alloa, viii., Parton; Campbell's *Balmerino*, p. 240.

[3] Cramond's *Church of Rathven*; Edgar, ii. 169.

parishioners who were sickly, and required help to travel to the favourite cures of the time, to drink the goat's milk in the Highlands, or to drink the waters at Moffat wells. Thereupon was handed to a parishioner "troubled with a tympany, to help to pay his charges to going to Moffat wells for cure, £3 Scots."[1] Every burden falls upon the Session. If the school needs repair it is applied to, and there is "given for thacking the school, £1, 4s." If there is found dead a vagrant, or some poor traveller, on the roadside, it has to disburse (1703): "To pay for coffin to a poor little one who was a stranger, 6s. 8d. Scots"; "for a chest to a poor stranger, £1."[2] Such small sums as these—only 6½d. for the vagrant child's coffin, only 1s. 8d. for the stranger's "chest"—show the spareness of the funeral expenses; and even the larger sums of 2s. and 3s. 6d. for chests for poor parishioners testify to the painful frugality which the poverty of the times required. But in many places even this expense was not displayed, and in the early part of the century for the poorer people a "parish chest" was often used, in which bodies were borne to the grave, and buried only in their winding-sheet or "dead-shift."[3] When the chest was half way down the bolts were withdrawn to let the bottom fall open, and the corpse fell with a thud to the ground in the shallow grave. Yet in spite of this rigid economy we find allowances given for funereal purposes which seem hardly becoming the stern and austere spirit of the ecclesiastical authorities of that era, however thoroughly they may have been in accordance with the customs of the people. We read how, conceding to these customs of the day, a Kirk-Session has given to a pauper's burial "for ale, 31s., and for tobacco and pipes to the said burial, 15s. 6d. Scots."

[1] Guthrie-Smith's *Strathendrick*, p. 70; *Parish of Shotts*, p. 46.

[2] 1722.—Kirriemuir.—Jervoise's *Memorials of Angus and Mearns*, i. 330.

[3] 1701.—"The Session of Rothesay desiderates yet the want of ane engyne to convey the coffin conventlie to the grave with the corps. Therefore they appointed John M'Neill, thesaurer, to agree with the smith to make and join to the said chest a loose iron cleek fit for receiving a man's hand at everie end, and appoints the same chest when finished to be recommended to the kirk officer; and he is strictly appointed to take particular care that the said chest when used be no way damnified."—Hewison's *Bute*, ii. 288. In 1780 paupers thus buried in Hawick.—Wilson's *Hawick*, p. 168; Campbell's *Balmerino*, p. 234.

It would be unjust to these bygone days and long-departed generations to suppose that their whole interest was devoted to preserving their charity for their own folk, and all their energy was devoted to turning other claimants away. That this was not the fact is abundantly shown by the old records of the period, which prove that though their means were small their hearts were very kindly. The very items inserted in the minutes, with their queer phraseology and quaint penmanship, bring up before us a vivid picture of the time and its simple ways. Curious claims were made at kirk doors upon these ministers and elders, as they, after prayer, stood waiting to attend to the various cases in turn. It may be a shipwrecked sailor wandering to his home in rags, and the case being duly considered and relieved, the clerk writes down: 1734—"To a dispersed seaman, a groat." Poor Highland students were not seldom trying to get their way on foot to the universities, carrying, perhaps, their bag of oatmeal and satchel of books slung over their shoulders; and these met ready attention";[1] and the clerk pens his items: "To a blind student that hath the Irish (Gaelic) language, 3d."; "to three poor students going to the college, a merk." In the crowd seeking help, when on sacramental Mondays the doles were distributed, might be found swarthy-faced, strangely clad foreign seamen, who tried to make their wants understood by the elders unacquainted with any tongue save their own, and the clerk with a bold guess enters the dole to "four Portuguese or Spanish shipwrecked sailors, 8s." Other foreigners pass through the country, and in hapless plight came before the Session. Now it is a "poor merchant," a "persecuted Polonian," or "a converted Mahometan," "a professor of tongues fled from France."[2] Among the jostling, noisy claimants would be many who were crippled, imbecile, and deformed and diseased—evidence of days of poverty and dirt in filthy, squalid homes—numerous as the lazzaroni who swarm in the streets and at the church porches of Spanish and Italian cities to-day; and disbursements to such unsightly beggars are faithfully written down: "To a great object, a

[1] *Church of Rathven*, p. 47.

[2] *Upper Deeside*, p. 105; Phillip's *Parish of Longforgan*, p. 188.

groat," to "extraneous strangers" and "distressed supplicant."[1] One of the most striking cases of charity were persons who professed themselves escaped slaves from the Turks. For more than two hundred years the pest of the Mediterranean had been the corsairs of Barbary. These pirates swooped down on every defenceless brig that they could descry, plundered the ships, and carried the crews and passengers into slavery. They were the terror of the seas, and the one object of dread to those who sailed by the coasts of Africa. Scottish ships not a few set sail every year laden with their goods—hides, tallow, serges—for export, intending to return by Spain with cargoes of oranges and wine after a two years' coasting trade in the southern ports. It was during these perilous two years that many found their fate, and were sold as slaves to merchants, or chained to the oars in the galleys. The people at home were pitiful to these poor prisoners—partly because of the cruelty they suffered, partly and chiefly because of their being Christians subjected to Mahometan tyranny. Collections were made often in churches to ransom these Christian slaves, and many who escaped returned in abject poverty to their own shores. Not seldom these poor men in rags appeared at the kirk door as they journeyed, after long years of captivity, on the way home seeking help, and would point with their fingers to their speechless mouths to show that they had had their tongues cut out by inhuman masters.[2] These never failed to enlist lively interest, and the entries are exceedingly common of aid given: "To a poor seaman all mangled by the Turks"; "to four men barbarously ill-treated by the Moors"; "to a seaman with his tongue cut out by the Moors of Barbary."[3] It might happen occasionally that the Sessions had their suspicions whether the professed escaped slaves were genuine or not, but they were obviously unwilling to give them the disadvantage of a doubt—and therefore help was given and due entry made: "Given to two poor men said

[1] 1734.—Cramond's *Church of Rathven.*

[2] "1723.—Given to distressed seaman who had his tongue cut out by the Turks, 2s. 10d."—*Kirk-Session of Rathven.* "1726.—To dumb man who had his tongue cut out by the Algerians, 3s."—*Kirk-Session of Fordyce.*

[3] Kirk-Session of Fordyce, 1734; Oathlaw, 1738; Fordyce, 1743.—*Scots Antiquary*, p. 183; 1897.

to have been in Turkish slavery, 3d."[1] Doubtless they were often imposed upon by "sailors" wrecked in ships that had never sailed the sea; by "Christian captives" who had been slaves on shores they had never seen.

Another form of distress peculiar to the early years of the century, which has a pathetic interest, is chronicled in the Session records of the period with painful frequency. That was the abject poverty into which some families of Episcopal ministers were thrown when they were cast out of their manses, at the time that Presbyterianism was re-established. It is impossible to follow the careers of those who were cast adrift to seek a scanty livelihood, which would keep soul and body together in those days when trades were few and money was scarce. The humiliating straits of some are revealed by entries like the following: "1721, Sep. 2.—Given to ane Episcopalian minister, £1, 16s. Scots"; "Given to another, 18s. Scots"; "Given to Episcopalian minister's wife and children, 6s. Scots."[2] Such significant accounts give a glimpse of a sad phase of old Scottish life—the poor "outed" Episcopal minister without congregation or stipend, or even means to procure sufficient food and clothing, forced to crave help from Presbyterian elders, who dourly gave a dole to the "curate" as to one tainted with the curse of Prelacy, and sometimes refused it on the ground that he "did not attend ordinances." Among the many claimants in the beginning of the century are found men of good rank and birth reduced by the poverty and reverses of fortune in those days when a very narrow margin of means lay between the incomes of impecunious lairds and farmers and absolute penury. The doles were not infrequently the sum of a groat or merk to persons denominated in the records "strange gentlemen," "poor gentlemen," "distressed gentlemen," while "a gentleman recommended by a nobleman" receives only 6d. Scots.[3] It was in those days that many small farmers and tradesmen who had fallen into need were enrolled in the list of "gentle beggars," and if their names

[1] *Ch. of Cullen.*

[2] *Notices of Carluke*, p. 78; *Stat. Acct.*, Inverarity.

[3] G. Smith's *Strathblane; Stat. Acct.*, Inverarity, Killearn: "1703.—To Robert Lennox, a poor gentlemen 8s., Scots."—*Strathendrick*, p. 66.

seldom appear in the Kirk-Session books it is because they were privileged to beg alms at any house.

Besides these distributions of money to persons who came before them, congregations also made special collections for purposes which we might imagine of remote interest and vague meaning to a people whose knowledge of the foreign world was scanty indeed. There are collections (1731) for "the distressed Protestant city of Reddan in Poland" (of which town and population the congregation must have cared little and known nothing);[1] "for the distressed paroche (Presbyterian) of New York in America"; "for the poor German Church in London." These purposes awakened little interest compared with collections "for living slaves in Algiers"; for "Simpson and his trew slaves in Algiers."[2]

It is pleasant to think of rural folk thus being awakened out of their dull life in the bleak moorlands on "Sabbath" mornings, and their sympathies aroused for distress and danger far beyond their doors, away to lands unfamiliar beyond the seas, full of mystery and romance to their Christian imaginations.

There are other demands on the charity which have not the merit of possessing any emotional element or any picturesque associations—contributions requested of the people which appear utterly unwarranted; for repairing bridges over distant rivers, steeples of churches and town halls which they would never see, piers and harbours they would never use. It is difficult to understand why in 1704 the not too wealthy labourers of Drumoak in Upper Deeside should have a collection called from them to mend the harbour of Kinghorn in Fifeshire[3] (the contributions in this case amount only to 14s. Scots), or why on another occasion they should be mulcted to put to rights the steeple of the burgh of Tain, which only extracts from them 11s. Scots. Equally puzzling is it to see why needy farmers in Strathblane church, in Stirlingshire, should contribute for the pier in St. Andrews; and the congregation of Inveresk, in

[1] Guthrie-Smith's *Strathblane*, p. 216.

[2] Campbell's *Balmerino*, p. 234; *Ch. of Cruden*, p. 216. Collection at Killearn, 1695: "To relieve some slaves that are in Barbary, £1 Scots."—G. S., *Strathendrick*, p. 66.

[3] *Upper Deeside*, by Henderson, p. 105.

Midlothian,[1] should be made to subscribe to a harbour in Girvan. Still more difficult is it to comprehend why this should be enjoined on all churches by order of the General Assembly.[2] These public calls were very frequent, and pressed hard on poor people in sore straits for food for their families; and they reveal the prevailing poverty of the times—towns being too small and destitute of trade to carry out local repairs at their own charges, and landowners having too little means or enterprise of their own to repair a county bridge. But they were burdens that did not move the Christian conscience to liberality, and made the folk murmur.[3]

Instead of being scornful at the petty sums gathered and dealt out in charity, we may rather admire the generosity of the people, when we consider the narrow circumstances and wretched condition of their life. The tenants of farms, paying for their little "paffles" of miserable land some £8 or £12 yearly rent, had little to spare; still less had the ploughman, who up to the middle of the century had only fourpence a week in money if he were unmarried, and if he were married had to feed, clothe, and educate a family on earnings equal only to £7 or £8 a year, of which all but £1 or £2 was paid in oat or barley meal. Even the blacksmith, carpenter, the weaver, had little money in their store, and in despair forced to give doits or bad copper in the "brods" to keep up their respectability, for they earned only 6d. a day, and even that sum was often mainly paid by their employers in "kind." Yet the people were hospitable to their (if possible) poorer neighbours—ready to give the beggars and passers by a share

[1] G. Smith's *Strathblane*, p. 216; *Inveresk*, by Lang. "Killearn, 1695.—Gathered for building a harbour at Kinkell, £1, 10s.; 1700—To help Lanark Bridge, 10s."—*Strathendrick*, p. 66.

[2] "1697, Aug. 15.—Killearn, according to Act of Commission of Assembly, authorised by Lords of Privy Councill, enjoyning a generall collection and voluntarie contribution throughout the kingdom for building a church at Konigsberge in Prussia, this to be done either at the church door or by elders through their several districts."—G. Smith's *Strathendrick*, p. 66.

[3] "The straits of this country is so great," wrote Wodrow, "thro' the want of victual that our collections are very far from maintaining our poor, and the people are in a great pet with collections for bridges, tolbooths, etc., that when a collection is intimate they are sure to give less than their ordinary."—*Analecta Scotica*, ii.

of their dinner of broth, a handful of oatmeal in their bags, or shelter by the peat fire at night. In the north-eastern counties the iron handles which held the fir-stick candles were long known as the "poor man,"[1] because the beggar for his food and roof assisted the good wife by holding for her the candle at night when she was busy at her household work in the dingy but kindly cottage.

Meagre as the doles of charity seem to us, they were really munificent in proportion to the style of living of the working classes and to the earnings of the period; and they therefore were received without a grudge by the claimants. Only is there complaint and muttering when a Kirk-Session, with no resources left except base brass, is obliged to give as alms coins which were "impassible."[2] Even past the middle of the century, when money was less scarce and wages were higher, Kirk-Sessions had to study strictest economy, and issued their aid in the smallest coins of the realm. In frugal Morayshire ministers were unwilling to face the extravagance of giving the large sum of one halfpenny to each claimant, and found a convenient compromise between the old Scots money and the new English[3] in the form of farthings which made the parish funds go much farther. But these coins were rare in Scotland, and the Synod got at various times large quantities from the mint of London for distribution amongst the various Sessions within its bounds, in their economical doles, until they could get no more supplies. This action on the part of ministers was, after all, not the most politic; for it is certain that the farthings doled out to the poor quickly found their way back to the plates on Sundays as naturally as rivers find their course to the sea.

[1] Rampini's *Morayshire.*

[2] "Poor woman complains that brass money in last distribution was doitts of little or no use to her."—*Maryton*, by Fraser, p. 230.

[3] "1753.—It was moved that as the good effect of bringing the last quantity of farthings from the mint of London was sensibly felt throughout the whole country, and has in a particular manner been beneficial to the poor, that, therefore, some person should be again employed to bring down to the amount of £500 for use of the Kirk-Sessions within the Synod." In 1763, "The Synod, considering the poor have suffered from the scarcity of farthings, recommend members to get £100 of the same down." In 1766, when a further application had been made, a letter from London announces: "No farthings are to be got, and none are to be coined for some years."—*Presbytery of Fordyce*, by Cramond.

IV

After the middle of the century the progress of agriculture, the development of trade, the rise of manufactures of all kinds —linen work especially—were working a social revolution in the country. The old stagnation of industrial life disappeared, the lethargy which had been painfully characteristic of the whole community vanished throughout the Lowlands; the state of abject poverty, which had come from lack of food, lack of work, lack of wages, passed away, as new methods of farming made the land fertile—as new occupations employed every hand, and demand for labour brought higher earnings to every class of the poor. If it happened that the price of living rose so high that the meagre doles were no longer sufficient to keep soul and body together, it also happened that there were far fewer poor who needed help in rural districts, and the swarming beggars who had no excuse for idleness were obliged to disappear or join the ranks of labour. It was in the large towns that poverty began to be felt—the waifs, the weak, the old, the loafers, who amidst the energy of work all around, were to form a pauper class in the towns as they increased in population.

It might naturally be supposed that as this development in trade and industry proceeded, that the funds at the disposal of the churches would increase in proportion, and that larger contributions would meet amply the needs of a growing population. There were many circumstances which prevented the realising of such a natural expectation. One of these was the origin and increase of dissent in the land. Presbyterian dissent had arisen in 1737, but the effect of that on the resources for the poor was not much felt till some time after the middle of the century, when the numbers of the Seceders had become very considerable throughout the country.[1] By that time the loss of these sturdy Christians to the Kirk seriously affected the amount of church collections, and what made it the more aggravating to the Kirk-Session was the fact that these dissenters themselves, when they became old,

[1] Moncreiff's *Life of Dr. Erskine*, p. 468; *Stat. Acct.*, Old Kilpatrick.

infirm, or sick, had no hesitation whatever in demanding relief from those funds to which they and their co-religionists had never contributed, and which their absence from the kirk had done much to reduce. Besides that, fines in commutation of discipline, fees for certificates of marriage and baptism, were now intercepted by the Sessions of dissenting bodies, such as Original Seceders, Episcopalians, and Relief Kirk. This matter was a source of incessant parochial irritation, and added intensity to sectarian bitterness. Yet another cause which lessened the contents of the poor-box was the increase of absenteeism on the part of proprietors. Of old they had lived in their country houses, and in spite of the straitness of their rents their care of the people had been kindly, and their intercourse with them had been intimate. Gradually more and more landowners resorted, with the growing incomes which "good times" brought, to Edinburgh, or London for months, and the poor-box got emptier. Many had adopted the Episcopal form of dissent, deserted the parish church in towns, and left the burgesses to look after the poor. As the country grew older a change also came over the religious habits of many classes in society—the old-fashioned austerity relaxed, and so likewise did the church-going ways—men of fashion and quality were conspicuous for their absence in kirk, where their fathers had been as conspicuous by their presence,[1] and the weekly collections for the poor in consequence grew less. In many a parish where one or two large proprietors owned the land, and these were either absent from the estate or absent from the church, they might not contribute a shilling to the poor on their own ground while drawing the rents from the whole parish. By all such circumstances more and more the burdens were left to be borne by the less well-to-do—the churchmen had to keep the dissenters; the tenants had to relieve the servants of the landlord, and according to the common saying in Scotland, it was the poor who maintained the poor.[2]

[1] "One cause of decrease in funds for poor is that men of rank and fortune are very irregular and even criminally neglective in their attendance on divine service on the Sabbath."—*Stat. Acct.*, Kilwinning, ii. 167; Chambers' *Pict. of Scotland.*

[2] "To my certain knowledge the heritors in certain parishes do little more than defray the tenth part of contributions to the poor."—*Farmer's Mag.* Nov. 1804.

By the middle of the century important changes in agriculture began seriously to affect the condition of the rural classes—changes which increased poverty and entailed distress for a while, till society settled down to a new order of things. Small tenants were being turned out to give place to larger farms, crofts were being absorbed in big holdings, patches of land which had given livelihood of a poor sort to hundreds were broken up in the North and turned into sheep-runs; many families were in this way cast adrift; small tenants were often reduced to be ploughmen or shepherds; and ploughmen were sometimes forced to seek employment in towns at the new factories springing up, for which they had little skill. In the towns was arising in crowded lanes a class of poor, far less careful, thrifty, and self-respecting than their rural neighbours, which began to form a permanent pauper element. It is true that this disadvantage of larger towns was not felt for a generation or two, because the increase of industry and trade was so great that it absorbed those who were cast out of old agricultural work; and besides that, in the country the development of husbandry with more numerous operations and vigorous methods of cultivation, and the larger amount of ground reclaimed from waste, and moor, and bog, gave more occupation and better wages.[1] Many circumstances were making the voluntary and church aid to relieve poverty more and more insufficient, and the necessity to meet the wants of an increasing population caused at last larger towns to avail themselves of a law—old as 1579—which authorised public assessments to be made for the support of the poor.

Yet in spite of all its population of 70,000 it was not till 1770 that Glasgow resorted to this tax; it was not till 1783 that Paisley, with its flourishing trade, employing 24,000 workers, and Greenock with its population of 18,000, and its commerce with the Indies, made any public assessment for its paupers; while in Edinburgh this was not done till the end of the century.[2]

[1] Towards the end of the century great numbers of Highlanders found their way to Glasgow and Greenock, driven from stress of poverty at home to increase poverty elsewhere.—Lettice's *Tour through Scotland*, Lond. 1794.

[2] Burn's *Dissertations*, p. 96. Reports of General Assembly in 1818 state that prior to 1700 assessments took place in only 3 parishes; between 1700 and

There were arguments combined of policy, and sentiment and piety brought forward with great vehemence against the imposition of rates. It was opposed on the score that the system would lessen the self-respect of the people; that it would obliterate all sense of shame in those who would accept from a public rate relief they disdained to accept from the "poor-box." It was condemned, on the one hand, as extinguishing kindliness in the rich, and on the other as extinguishing gratitude and self-dependence in the poor. There was an exceeding bitter cry from ministers throughout the country at the end of the century against any change in the old patriarchal system,[1] which they regarded as sacred—a burden of divine appointment, and in clear conformity with Scripture. As a rule, the people had a feeling of humiliation at being paupers; there was even a shame in having one of their relatives on the "poor-box," as it was called, and to avoid such a fate themselves was a constant motive for frugality and saving.[2] Yet all the while it is clear that gradually the vaunted feeling of pride was dying away, and that to be a pauper, or to "be on the poor-box," had lost in some districts much of its odium.[3]

After all, it is impossible to feed, clothe, and support the destitute on sentiment, and the inevitable needs of life must be met by means more regular and sustaining than a fitful spirit of independence in the peasantry. It is more likely that vanity, and not honest pride, was the most successful deterrent to any one allowing his name to appear on the poor-roll. The great ambition of the very poorest was to have what

1800 in 93 parishes; and up to 1817 in 142. In Report of 1739 the numbers assessed were 142.—Nicholl's *Scottish Poor and Poor Laws*, p. 102.

[1] Kames' *Sketches of Man*, vol. i.; *Stat. Acct.*, Coldstream, iv. 418; Portmoak, vi. 168; Selkirk, ii. 443; Dalserf, ii. 380.

[2] Burns' *Dissertation*, vi.: "So great commonly is the horror and aversion entertained, that the most humiliating and insufferable term of reproach that can be cast upon any one is that their parents or near relatives were supported by the Session as it is called." "So great is this sentiment, that in order that this odium may never fall upon their offspring they study to live with the utmost frugality that they may be able to save something for old age as to bury them decently. To have wherewithal to purchase a coffin and a winding-sheet, if nothing more, is the height of their ambition."—*Farmer's Mag.* p. 24, 1804; *Stat. Acct.*, Old Kilpatrick; Newte's *Tour*, p. 337, 1790.

[3] *Stat. Acct.*, Killearn, xvi. 621; Irvine, vii. 178.

was called a "decent funeral"—that is, a funeral to which all the male inhabitants of the parish were invited, and at which the usual entertainments must be given.[1] The expense for coffin, ale or whisky, cake, and tobacco, amounted at least to £2, and this sum all persons in the meanest circumstances were anxious to lay up for the event of their death, and would not expend otherwise except in direst necessity. The convivial obsequies, however, could not happen in the case of any who were on the poor-roll, either of the church or of the parish, because before a person became a pauper he was required to give up all his "goods and plenishing" to the Session. He had, therefore, only to look for a pauper's burial, an ill-made "kist"—costing 4s.—without the dignity of a threadbare mortcloth to cover it, and only an attenuated line of thirsty, hungry, unsatisfied mourners to follow it. Rather than disappoint a poor soul of a festive funeral, sympathetic Kirk-Sessions often supplied some money for ale, and tobacco, and pipes, or even gave the relatives £2, if the effects given up by the deceased had come near to that sum—acting with a liberality and kindliness unknown to unsentimental and remorseless poor-laws.[2] To be buried respectably, and be clad decently as a corpse, was a firm, self-respecting resolution. When a woman married she spun her winding-sheet. It was kept with reverence, every year taken out and aired, and put carefully in a drawer till it was required for the burial.

Up to the close of the century the public assessments were very rare, although it was in towns becoming obvious that the existing arrangements were insufficient, and that pauperism was no longer a problem with which the Church alone could cope.[3] Ministers, in their various Statistical Accounts of their respective parishes in 1792-4, are forced in despair to long for improved methods of relief in spite of their fond,

[1] *Stat. Acct.*, Kincardine, vi. 487; Gargunnock, 18.

[2] Burns (Robert), D.D., *Dissert. on Law and Practice with regard to the Poor*, 1819, p. 297. In 1830 the burial of a pauper in town cost about 12s.—coffin 6s., bottle of whisky 1s. 6d. to drink at the "lifting," with a loaf of bread and cheese, and 3s. or 4s. for grave.—Chambers' *Picture of Scotland*, p. 240.

[3] Ayton's *Survey of Ayrshire*, 1811. Annual payment to single pauper in 1830 had risen to £2 : 11 : 8, or about 1s. a week. In cities 1s. 6d. and 2s. was the common weekly allowance.—Chambers' *Book of Scotland*, p. 239.

pathetic love of the old patriarchal ways, and they depict a miserable state in remoter districts.[1] In Sutherland, we read, Cromdale has a population of 3000, and has only from £10 to £15 a year to support forty paupers—"many being reduced householders who would rather starve than beg." Dornoch with its population of 2540 has from eighty to a hundred on the poor-list, "whose only means of support is part of the collection, amounting to £7, supplemented by fines from delinquents, so that the poor live by begging from parish to parish." In Wick there is a poor-roll of 150, and yet there is little else to maintain them except the collections which, "after deducting bad coppers, amount to from £10 to £12, affording 2s. a year to each pauper."[2] Yet in northern counties what else could be expected? The inhabitants had not work enough to keep half of their numbers in employment, and they lived in misery, rags, and hovels, in chronic anticipation of a dearth amounting to famine every four or five years. Those in work could not give much to church collections on Sundays, or help to their neighbours who begged on week days. The mystery was how they subsisted or existed at all. Coming farther south, we may take as an illustration of social poverty at the end of the eighteenth century the parish of Abernethy, in Perthshire;[3] it has 1760 inhabitants, and it has £6 a year as parochial funds to feed, clothe, and shelter its paupers — "not enough," as the minister says, "to buy shoes for their feet, so that they live chiefly by begging from the farmers from door to door." It is true that many parishes—indeed the majority—were able to support the poor somehow on the small parochial funds at their disposal, especially as family pride made people support their relatives rather than that they should incur the stigma of being on the poor-roll. But in others—especially in towns

[1] "The Highland poor have of late become so numerous in the Lowlands that some towns positively refuse them admittance. 'We are eat up,' say they, 'with beggars.'"—Knox, *British Empire*, i. 126.

[2] *Stat. Acct.*, Cromdale; Dornoch; Wick. Rogart had a population of 2000, and only £14 of poor-money; Kildonan a pop. of 1400, poor-money only £8; Assynt, pop. 2400, poor-money £11. — Stewart's *Sketches of Highlands*, i. 165.

[3] *Stat. Acct.*, Abernethy, vol. xiii.; Lochmaben.

—the strain was far greater on voluntary charity than it could bear.[1]

At the same time the growth of trade, the increase of industrial activity, had greatly diminished poverty; the half-starved Highlanders got work in cotton mills and factories, and beggars ceased to swarm in the land. Owing to the remarkable revolution which had come over the country—the rapid rise in trade, in commerce, in agriculture—the wages of the people had increased, and even doubled. The earnings of the ploughman in 1750 had been equal only to £7 or £8 a year, but in 1790 they were equal to £14 or £16, and with that they lived in fair content and comfort. In trades, the mason, the weaver, the carpenter who could in 1750 only earn his 6d. a day, in 1790 made his 1s. or 1s. 2d.[2]

If they paid more for their food they were better housed, they were better clad, they had comforts to which in their youth they had been strangers, and enjoyed things now which indeed were still luxuries, although to their children they became necessities. Yet the increased cost of living, the price of clothing, house rent, and education, used up much of their larger earnings, and did not leave a very wide margin for saving, nor yet for spending.

V

There was one altered aspect of social life and feeling which many observers noted with regret towards the close of the century—that was the diminishing of homely, kindly relations between the richer and the poorer classes. In olden days there was a real attachment and friendship between the different ranks, especially in the rural districts. All indeed

[1] Gibson's *Hist. of Glasgow*. Speaking of Glasgow in 1800, a writer says, "The pauper class is too insignificant to be separated from the operative class." —*Glasgow Past and Present*, ii. 94. In Edinburgh, with a population in 1773 of 80,000, there were only 1800 paupers, which includes all the boys at educational charitable institutions [such as Heriot's Hospital], while Bristol with a less population has no fewer than 10,000.—Arnot's *Hist. of Edinburgh*, p. 559.

[2] Compare the condition of the labouring classes in France, who had 10d. a day before the Revolution, and 1s. 3d. after, and the English peasant who had 1s. 5d. and the skilled artisan who had from 2s. to 2s. 6d.—Young's *Travels in France*, p. 410.

were alike poor, their ways were alike simple; spinning was the occupation, and frugality was the necessity both of laird's wife and the farmer's wife. The landlords and their families were intimate with, and interested in, the concerns and fortunes of the humbler classes near their doors, who had lived in the same quarters for generations, in days when there was no trade to attract them away, and no "improvements" to turn them out. The children, rich and poor, the sons of laird, minister, farmer, ploughman, sat on the same forms at the parish school, sharing its teaching and its not quite impartial discipline. After the middle of the century and onwards to its close, however, there was a transformation for the worse in these relations, and there appeared a widening gulf between each rank. As agricultural progress advanced, the farmer, who had formerly been on about the same social level as his workpeople, who were often his own kin and—if they lived under his roof—sat at the same board, became a "man of substance," and with a larger farm, larger rent, and larger income, adopted more ambitious tastes and habits, having less in common, and more distant relationship, with his servants. The lairds, too, with the better times and bigger rent-rolls, forsook the simpler ways and style of the past, and forgot those old days when their fathers went clad in clothing which their own wives had spun; they lived less in the country or among their own people, while in their natural desire to improve their property and their rents they added farm to farm; whereby small tenants were deprived of their holdings and labourers of their work, and then new men came into the new reclaimed acres. It is easy to see how all these changes materially affected social relationships, and how separation in interest and sympathy was further increased between rich and poor.

A similar process—loosening attachment and widening the distance between higher and lower ranks—went on in towns, notably in Edinburgh. When families of all ranks[1] —from the highest to the lowest—lived close to one another, in the High Street and Canongate, in the same tenement or "land" of nine or ten flats, there existed a special neighbour-

[1] W. Chambers' *Book of Scotland*, 1830, points this out, p. 226.

liness among them all. In the several "landings," descending in dignity as they ascended in height, dwelt on the same stair peers, lords of session, clergy, doctors, shopkeepers, dancing-masters, artisans, while in the cellar lodged the water-caddy, the sweep, and the chairman. The distress of the poor neighbour on the stair became the concern of all, and poverty in the "close" was relieved in common friendliness. The very beggars were old friends, and exchanged jokes with his lordship going to the Parliament House. But about 1770 the fashionable and wealthy began to migrate to the suburbs and stately houses in the New Town; they withdrew from the ill-flavoured wynds in the High Street, where high and low had for ages dwelt companionably together. The poor remained behind in the old quarters, and the rich when they left did not lose their homely interest in them. Now, therefore, when poverty came, public assessments were made to relieve it; when beggars increased the law was enforced to suppress them.

There is abundant evidence that as the century proceeded there sprang up an independence in manner in the quickly increasing artisan classes, and a lessening of that deference and respect for rank which had curiously subsisted in spite of ancient homely intimacy and familiarity of rural intercourse. This change has been traced in part to the rise and spread of the Secession from the Church, which generated a spirit of antagonism in the poorer classes of the "dour" type to those who held by the old Church.[1] To them the title of "humble" ranks would be a misnomer. The very cause of the schism — a fierce opposition to the patronage exercised by the heritors and State, and a scorning of the Establishment as corrupt, as backsliding, as faithless—filled those who seceded with a stalwart opinionativeness, a grim consciousness of their superior godliness and purity, and there was no sacrifice of time too great to make, no journey too long to take, which enabled them to listen to the words of a faithful preacher of the Covenant. This religious pride—if we do not care to call it conceit—no doubt had its fine side of conscientiousness, and its interest-

[1] Ramsay's *Scotland and Scotsmen*, ii. 58.

ing picturesqueness. But it certainly did foster a brusqueness of manner and independence of spirit which passed from church polity to politics, and infected at large the whole community. Now it happened that instead of laird and people all being of one religious body, all meeting together in the same kirk, and having intercourse in the kirkyard, the Seceder, without a touch of his bonnet, passed the laird on the road, and stalked on with satisfaction of superiority of conviction to the meeting-house of the "body" he belonged to. This helped to introduce discordance of interest which, blended with other causes, served to widen the cleavage of ranks.

Meanwhile changes of life and opinion were occurring in the Highlands, all tending to the same direction, producing similar effects. After the '45 all despotic authority and jurisdiction were taken out of the hands of Highland chiefs, and they therefore no longer counted, as in olden days, their power and property by men rather than by acres; and they no longer cared to see their people increase in the glens, for these could no more add to their strength or enhance their importance.[1] Of old every reeking chimney in the glen had indicated where dwelt a family of trusty adherents in the fray; but now it was only a hovel which swarmed with beings who were a burden on the land. Formerly, too, these owners had spent their rental paid "in kind" in huge hospitality at home, in which the poor and the beggar joined; now they often spent their fortunes in the fashionable world, in which only people of quality shared. The needy, in short, were no longer merely "poor neighbours," but nuisances; and beggars were no longer homely features on the estate, but pests to be suppressed by law.

To counteract the effect of these social changes in the relations between rich and poor as affecting the support of the needy and the paupers, there came the growth and spread of industry, which gave work to the community, the increase of wealth among the middle ranks, and of wages among the

[1] "It is a certain fact the chieftains in the Highlands are now for the most part, instead of being almost adored, in general despised. And why? Many because their lands are let out in large sheep-walks to tenants that are nearly as independent as themselves, and the tenants turned out of their small possessions have no more favours in expectation."—Hall's *Travels*, ii. 507.

working classes. The times had changed, the thoughts, the ways, the interests and habits of the century had undergone a great transformation; but the development of intellectual and physical energy, the improvement in social conditions, which made life less sordid and rude, more than compensated for the quaintness of the old fashions which were lost, and the picturesqueness of rural life and simplicity of spirit which had passed away for ever.

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